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Hamlet Studies

Vol 6

1984

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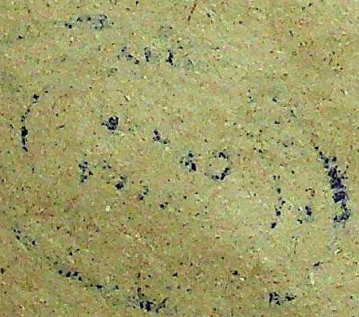

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HAMLET STUDIES

An International Journal of Research on

THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, Prince of Denmarke.

Vol. 6 Summer and Winter 1984 Nos. 1 and 2

JOAN HUTTON LANDIS — **Shakespeare's Poland**

VINCENT F. PETRONELLA — *Hamlet:* **The International Theme**

R.F. FLEISSNER — *Princeps Arte Ambulandi:* **The Pace of Hamlet**

ROBERT R. WILSON — **Narratives, Narrators and Narratees in** *Hamlet*

PREM NATH — *Hamlet* **in the Eighteenth Century, 1701-1750**

Notes, Production Reports, and Reviews etc. by

SHANTI PADHI, ERIC RASMUSSEN, GREG BENTLEY, ROBERT E. BURKHART, ROBERT F. WILLSON, JR., SUDHAKAR MARATHE, GERMAINE MARC'HADOUR, BERNICE W. KLIMAN, J.J.M. TOBIN, W. HUTCHINGS, NIELS LUKMAN, CHARLES FORKER

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
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Hamlet Studies, the first journal devoted exclusively to a single literary work, publishes articles, notes, book reviews, reports on significant stage productions, and a digest of articles on *Hamlet* in other journals. It also features a critical forum for the views and comments of its readers.

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ROBERT R. WILSON teaches Renaissance Literature, including Shakespeare, the History of Literary Criticism and Literary Theory, at the University of Alberta. His essays have appeared in *English Literary Renaissance*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Modern Philology*, *Critical Inquiry* and *Mosaic*. He has just completed guest-editing a special issue of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 12: 2 (1985) devoted to the discussion of play and game concepts in literature. He has contributed four articles to the forthcoming *Spenser Encyclopedia*.

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Comments and Announcements

Like the previous issues, the present volume of *Hamlet Studies* has the virtue of variety. Samuel Johnson, in a well known passage, praised the play for this feature:

> If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterised each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of *Hamlet* the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations, and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man.

The first two essays, those by Joan Hutton Landis and Vincent F. Petronella, look at the international element in *Hamlet*. The former focuses on Poland as the target of hostility. Tradition and custom have so dictated that it occupies a position of subjugation in the eyes of Hamlet Senior, Fortinbras, and Hamlet himself who stabs Polonius, "the Polish one, the Pole." And yet, we wonder, the author argues, whether Hamlet truly believes in the customary revenge ethic, whether Shakespeare isn't "dramatizing the case of a superior human being, a true prince, being forced into the terms of an ethos for which he was not fitted and which in and of itself is reprehensible."

The second essay widens the lens angle to include, besides Poland, several other countries within its sweep. Fortinbras the foreigner stands for the outside world that prevails over the Danish identity. He presents a dual face: a Norwegian prince with a French name. The embodiment of internationalism, he is instrumental in wiping out the Danish royal family; "Denmark is indeed swamped by the World."

Peripatetic activity in *Hamlet* is the subject of R.F. Fleissner's piece, a blend of the serious and the mock-serious. Hamlet's predilection for leisurely pacing—"You know sometimes he walks four hours together / Here in the lobby"—gives place at the play's end to a fast-paced fencing match in which he outclasses his rival while succumbing himself.

Robert R. Wilson's article on Narratives, Narrators, and Narratees in *Hamlet* through indirections finds directions out, reaching the inter-

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esting conclusion that Horatio, of all the characters, is the best qualified narrator. He has both talent and education; the play begins with him telling stories, and it ends with his declaring himself ready to narrate Hamlet's story.

The article by Prem Nath on *Hamlet* in the first half of the eighteenth century will be followed by its sequel in the next volume of *Hamlet Studies*. This marks the beginning of a series that we hope to bring out dealing with *Hamlet* in different periods of literary history, up to the present. The suggestion for this kind of coverage came from Jay L. Halio in his review of *Hamlet Studies* that appeared in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Autumn 1980. (Since then, *Hamlet Studies* has been reviewed in *Shakespeare Survey*, 34, p. 171; *American Notes and Queries*, 22, p. 82; and *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 46, p. 460.) Readers of the journal whose interest lies in any particular period and who are inclined to write surveys on the above lines are invited to send their proposals to the editor.

. . .

Several readers have written to inquire as to why the articles that featured in the last volume of the journal have not been included in the survey that forms a part of the latest issue of *Shakespeare Survey*. Whereas the Editorial Board of *Hamlet Studies* is not in a position to explain the omission, it would like to advise authors of articles that have featured in *Hamlet Studies* to heed the notification put out by *Shakespeare Survey*, that sending the offprints of such articles to the editor of *Shakespeare Survey* will improve the prospects of their being reviewed in the next issue of the *Survey* that is to appear.

. . .

In view of the uncertainty of the mails in all parts of the world, contributors are advised to mail the covering letter to the editor in a separate envelope from the article itself, since the chances of both going astray are remote. *Hamlet Studies* acknowledges immediately and by air mail all contributions received. If an acknowledgement is not received within two weeks, contributors should write again to the editor.

. . .

. . . as thisfell sergeant, Death
Is strict in his arrest

Shakespeareans all over the world will mourn the passing away of

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Gāmini Salgādo in June 1985.* Professor of English at the University of Exeter, author of several books on Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and modern fiction, and a member of the Advisory Board of *Hamlet Studies*, he was recently at the University of Delhi on a short visit. Professor Salgādo gave a scholarly and invigorating lecture on Shakespeare and the Stage to a large audience of post graduate students and faculty members. A man of great personal charm and warmth, he refused to allow the illness that claimed him to dampen his spirits, and displayed the Yeatsian attitude of being able to "laugh into the face of Death." A Centenary collection of original essays on D.H. Lawrence, co-edited by him and G K. Das, Professor of English at the University of Delhi and also a member of the Advisory Board of *Hamlet Studies*, is in the process of being published by Macmillan (London) and will be out soon.

*This volume of *HSt* is one year behind schedule.

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Shakespeare's Poland

JOAN HUTTON LANDIS

> If it were seriously asked who of all teachers and masters that have ever taught hath drawn the most disciples after him, both in religion and in manners, it might be not untruly answered, custom.
>
> John Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*

What can we know of Poland in *Hamlet*? How might it direct our reading of the play?

In Act 1 Scene 1 Horatio divulges that he saw King Hamlet once when "in an angry parle / He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice" (lines 62-63).[1] This reminiscence is important in many ways. It will make it impossible to form an image of Hamlet's father that is highly differentiated from that of other males who act in anger, to whom violent reprisal is natural. The destructive heat of anger creates the ice of winter. The name Poland seems, at first, self-explanatory. It is a place conveniently near Denmark, one of those crossroad countries through and against which armies have always marched, but which will, in retrospect, take on an importance that is more than literal. As with other peripheral places in the Shakespearean terrain—Jerusalem, Turkey—Poland is symbolic geography of the richest sort.

When we learn that young Fortinbras will honor his uncle's sanction against invading Denmark to win back lands lost in combat, and that he will, instead, be permitted to go against Poland, we begin to see that that place represents not only the butt of aggression but the urge to fight regardless of cause. Poland thus connects old Hamlet to young Fortinbras as a double. When Denmark, the real object of hostility, is made unavailable, Poland is substituted. This act of displacement is crucial. It points up a process of dislocation and repression that has many variants in the play. Its repetitions will tell a cautionary tale.

Poland is the focus of hostility again in 4.4 when we glimpse Fortinbras marching towards it. The Captain states that "the little patch of ground / That hath no profit in it but the name" is an excuse to fight.

[1]All quotations from *Hamlet* are taken from *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, Gen. Ed. Alfred Harbage (The Pelican Text Revised, New York, 1977).

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Hamlet sees into the motivation clearly enough, designating the action as

> The imposthume of much wealth and peace
> That inward breaks and shows no cause without
> Why the man dies.

But in his soliloquy at the close of this short scene, Hamlet enunciates the paradox at the heart of the matter, and in so doing shifts ground:

> Rightly to be great
> Is not to stir without great argument,
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
> When honor's at the stake.

True greatness and the kind of action perpetrated in the name of "honor" are different. He believes he has the great cause of the first proposition but cannot act; therefore he takes on the scorned Polish putsch as a cognitive and emotional model. Indeed, the puffing up of his anger in his potential revenge against Claudius has been a consciously used and reiterated device since the ghost's revelation. What is not conscious, not articulated nor admitted, are the real reasons that restrain him. False and true reasons divide him in two, giving rise to his terrible questions, anguish, delay. The situation is echoed throughout the play by such cries as, "But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue" (1.2.159), and his sense that to unpack his heart with words is to become a "drab" (2.2.72). In the code of revenge, to question one's duty to a loved father would be equivalent to prostitution. At 4.4 Hamlet reiterates that to harness his anger would be to act just as he had, earlier, vowed to erase from his memory "all trivial fond records, / All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past" (1.5.98-100).

But Hamlet is not a murderer and the entire weight of his past education and deepest nature cannot be eradicated simply by strategies. His life-celebrating past, his moral imagination, impedes such an action as effectively as any physical restraint except in those discrete moments when he is worked up and when the circumstances provide the necessary ingredients, as they do at 3.4. There, enraged by the presence of his betraying mother, full of self-disgust at his passing up of the chance to kill Claudius, he hears a noise behind the arras which signals the presence of something hidden. Hamlet stabs, only to discover Polonius, the Polish one, the Pole. If we remember that in Q1 the old coun-

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selor's name was Corambis, that Shakespeare has presumably changed it to Polonius, that Polonian was the founder of that nation,[2] the link between those "sledded Polacks," the little plot of ground not worth an eggshell in Poland, and the busy old man who was King Hamlet's advisor before he was Claudius's, and so an on-going source of poison in the ear, becomes manifest. Poland and Polonius are both images of and targets for anger, for the process of its displacement. Hamlet will, if unwittingly, emulate his father, but, instead of smiting "sledded Polacks," will succeed only in killing Polonius, will come to envy Fortinbras whom he oddly nominates "that delicate and tender prince" (4.4.48), yet whom he perceives correctly on another level as a thug. Finally he will confront Laertes, son of Polonius, kill him and be killed by him.

Poland is, then, a specific geographical metaphor for a complex situation that is dramatized variously in the play. Because madness, anger, rashness are excellent goads to action, Hamlet invites and manufactures these. We hear him say as much, see him dazzled by the player who can weep for a "fiction," we see him or hear of him committing murder without hesitation twice, praising rashness for that ability. Indeed, he addresses the dead Polonius as "thou wretched, rash, intruding fool" (3 4.32). Fascinated with the taking on of dramatic roles that enable men to move out of complexity into simplicity, Hamlet names his own role, after Polonius's murder, as heaven's "scourge and minister." Hamlet will imitate Pyrrhus, Lucianus, force himself to play the avenger in a play that he progressivcly conceives to be outer-directed by a God or a Providence that is, Itself, a Pyrrhus or a Fortinbras going against Poland. Hamlet does not equate this Director of his play, this God, with the other fathers—Norway, Hamlet, England, Achilles, Jephthah—or with figures like Fortinbras, Laertes, Pyrrhus, or Lamord, that deathly "scrimer" from France, but he sanctifies the process of revenge, seeks for examples "gross as earth" everywhere and takes his part in the obedience to what he will call elsewhere—custom.

[2]See R.R. Cawley's *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Modern Language Association of America Monograph Series, VIII, Boston and London, 1938), p. 247. In a long footnote on the argument over the word *Polacks*, which some critics have preferred to read as *pole-axe*, Cawley adds:

> And Hakluyt (III, 389) yields an interesting etymology: "Polonian whom the Russe calleth Laches, noting the first author or founder of the nation, who was called Laches or Leches, whereunto is added Po, which signifieth People, and so is made Polaches, that is, the People or posterity of Laches."

Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations* was published in one folio volume in 1589 and in its final form (three black-letter folios) in 1599.

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I want now to explore the ways in which going against Poland may be seen as an enactment of "custom"; a monster identified by Hamlet but not specifically connected to the revenge ethic which he must embrace however foreign to his nature and to the best nature of society itself. I will suggest that while historical criticism has long taken it for granted that the revenge to which Hamlet is bidden is upheld by Shakespeare, by the society for which he wrote as well as by Hamlet himself, such an ethic is precisely what is called into question. Not, as Norman Rabkin has argued so persuasively,[3] as one half of a situation in which mighty opposites are poised—that situation he has termed "complementarity"—but, rather, one in which the best choice is obliquely valorized by the playwright while being progressively worked away from by the hero. That flight from self, finely described by Robert Heilman in regard to Lear, Macbeth and Othello, is enacted by Hamlet in its most subtle form.[4]

Hamlet is at first differentiated by Shakespeare from the ordinary male and from his royal doubles, as I have argued. These doubles, both fathers and sons, act, as if in obedience to some tyrannous custom, the ritual of brother-murder begun by Cain (to whom Claudius refers) and in "continuous practice" to the present time. Indeed, the game or play or ritual of dueling can be seen as a living vestige of that primal hostility. From the first, Hamlet has had a horror of obedience to wrong commands and his fury at Ophelia can be traced to her filial obedience, so much the picture of his own, if never recognized by him as such. This obedience is simply a form of custom, sometimes salutary, but most often destructive.

Now custom in its beneficent sense is what comprises the habits and traditions of a place uniquely, so that it is *that* place and no other. But in all tragic territory—Venice, Verona, Rome, Scotland—the customary is what has become habitual because no one has doubted, challenged or resisted it. No one has seen it. One is reminded of Victor Schklovsky's brilliant line on the subject: "Habitualization devours objects, clothes, furniture, one's wife, the fear of war."[5] His antidote, like Shakespeare's, is art, for art has the power to make ordinary things "unfamiliar." His prognosis applies—if by assays of bias—to Elsinore. In Verona, in

[3]Norman Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding* (New York; Macmillan, 1976).

[4]Robert Heilman, "T'Were Best Not Know Myself," in *Shakespeare 400: Essays by American Scholars on the Anniversary of the Poet's Birth* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1964), pp. 89-98.

[5]Quoted by Robert Scholes in *Structuralism in Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 83-84.

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Romeo and Juliet, it was the feud and all the behavior attendant on it that had rigidified into a way of life and a point of view. In the Rome of *Titus Andronicus* war had been waged for years and was the habitual mode of action with its ensuing customs of sacrifice, revenge, imprisonment, rape and induration of the human heart.

In Denmark, where customs have been honored more in the breach than in the observance, we are seeing a regressive return to that primal condition in which war blots out distinction between night and day, in which wassail and drunkenness are resumed, where incest and brother-murder are practised. The custom there is to obey authority without questioning the intrinsic good or evil of the command, as Gertrude obeys Claudius's every wish and as Ophelia obeys those of her father and her brother, even when they are clearly retrograde to her desire and to her trust in Hamlet's vows. The women of Elsinore obey men who are figures of authority but who are also morally inferior beings. When the ghost tells his son of the circumstances of his murder, for example, we learn that he was sleeping in his garden, "my custom always of an afternoon" (1.5.61). To repeat one's actions without constant sensitivity to motive is predictable and therefore dangerous. (The setting for this murder is reminiscent of the garden of Eden and the fall of Adam.) That poison poured into the porches of his ear, which barked about his body with a "vile and loathsome crust"—ice?—is the particularized form of the poison that affects the country: custom. Hamlet nearly perceives this as he nearly perceives but never fully articulates the reasons he delays in killing Claudius. Revenge is a custom, accepted and expected by fathers of their sons. However, to question it, to refuse to obey it, would have been a choice sanctioned by the greatest source of authority in the world: Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Marcellus has described the landscape as it can be when the "Saviour's birth is celebrated" (1.1.159). All is "hallowed" and "gracious." Such a return to or re-creation of peace might be retrievable but it would entail the visionary power and the courage to distinguish good authority from evil, requiring that pause enacted by Pyrrhus before the murder of Priam, or in which Claudius tried to pray, that cessation of on-going violence in which it is putatively possible to break out of one mode of reality and enter into another. I say that Hamlet almost understands the danger of the customary for he names it a monster, sees its operations in others clearly. He fails only to place his own case fully in that context. He represses the great question, "Should I obey?" To demonstrate more precisely how Hamlet refuses to connect or to make the analogies that would offer another alternative, I want now to enter Gertrude's closet.

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Just after Hamlet has murdered Polonius, he states his first purpose: to wring his mother's heart. He shall do it, he says, "If damned custom have not brazed it so / That it is proof and bulwark against sense" 3.4.37-39). Hamlet does force Gertrude to see her actions in a new light, to perceive, perhaps, that it was her customary dependence on being a wife, regardless of the nature of the tutelary male, that could so blind her to her choice of husband. To break the tyranny of custom he outlines a way to salvation:

> Confess yourself to heaven,
> Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
> And do not spread the compost on the weeds
> To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue.
> For in the fatness of these pursy times
> Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
> Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Gertrude asserts that he has cleft her heart in twain:

> O, throw away the worser part of it,
> And leave the purer with the other half.
> Good night—but go not to my uncle's bed.
> Assume a virtue if you have it not.
> That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,
> Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
> That to the use of actions fair and good
> He likewise gives a frock or livery
> That aptly is put on. Refrain tonight
> And that shall lend a kind of easiness
> To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
> For use can almost change the stamp of nature,
> And either curb the devil, or throw him out
> With wondrous potency.

Listen particularly to the verbs: *confess*, *repent*, *avoid*, *forgive*, *throw away*, *go not*, *assume*, *refrain*, *change*, *throw out*. It is as a test of sanity that Hamlet is speaking here and his words do comprise the most healthful music in the play. To confess, repent, avoid and forgive means to take stock of one's life and actions in a discriminating way, to separate what is beneficial from that which is blind, automatic, expedient or self-serving only. It is to *see* and *feel* in the way Schklovsky prescribes, by defamiliarization. It is to re-imagine. This scene, which encompasses

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the murder of Polonius, that symbolic attack on Poland, and includes another visitation from the ghost, is also the pastoral center of the play. The truth uttered here is the proper version of the kind designated by Polonius when he offered to find that center "where the truth is hid" (2.2.158). If Hamlet could have followed his own advice, exposing Claudius without murdering him, repenting the murder of Polonius, avoiding the legacy of revenge, he could then have been true to that self which was, even then, on its way to destruction.

In anatomizing the kinds of obedience that pertain in *Hamlet*, it is interesting to note that the word "obedience" itself stems from the Latin *ob+audire:* to listen to, or to give ear to, or toward. The repeated words—obey or obedience--are thus another way of extending all the imagery focused by the word *ear*, as it is implicated in the act of spying or eavesdropping. Obedience to the wrong authority is equivalent to depending solely on one's ear, rather than that evidence to which the whole sensory being, or the heart, has access.

One notes, too, that the words *habit*, *custom*, *frock*, *livery*, *put on*, *use*, *change* are interwoven so closely as to direct our attention to the analogy between habit as clothes or as tradition; between custom and costume.[6] We remember that the first time we see Hamlet he is clad in "customary suits of solemn black" (1.2.78); that he calls them "but the trappings and the suits of woe." The connection. made again so stunningly in the lines quoted from 3.4, works throughout the play. Customs are, like costumes, coverings; actions or processes that stand apart from the particular reality of a situation or person. However, while custom is portrayed in *Hamlet* as part of the rottenness that pervades the state of Denmark, it has its healthy attributes. Life without it would be barren and disorienting. Hamlet perceives this and when he counsels Gertrude to change her habits, he is suggesting that to imitate or to enact a proper response—as Hecuba did for Priam—is to begin to change one's own nature and that of society itself. The dram of eale in the crucible of disobedience is transmutable. Gertrude does choose loyalty to her son over obedience to Claudius and though it is her act of disobedience in drinking from the poisoned cup that is the cause of her death, it is, concomitantly, the sign of her new person.

Hamlet does not ever overtly consider the possibility of disobeying his father's injunctions. Rather, in the very moment at which he convinces Gertrude of his sanity and provides her with new sight, he adopts

[6]For an excellent discussion of this pun, see Wylie Sypher, *The Ethic of Time: Structures of Experience in Shakespeare* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), pp. 75-77.

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the role that will ring its terrible changes upon him as heaven's scourge and minister. He does, progressively, invite and use "rashness" as the emotional context in which to act. Thus, he sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths, boards the pirate boat, grapples with Laertes and accepts the duel. That duel returns him in his 30th year, the very anniversary of the gravedigger's hiring, to a repetition of his own father's duel with old Fortinbras, to determined recidivism: a return to custom. Defiance of augury or the rite of intuitive foreseeing is also the defiance of his heart, or the self's true center. As Horatio has advised: "If your mind dislike anything, obey it" (5.2.206). Rather, Hamlet will insist on another obedience: he delivers his famous lines about special providence. There are several ways of interpreting these lines. The first, and most customary way, taken persuasively by such critics as Maynard Mack, Frank Kermode, Susan Snyder, J.A. Bryant and others,[7] is to see Hamlet acting on the basis of a new enlightenment, proceeding from his perception that all is ordered by God and that one has only to take one's part in such order. They find this an optative turn of events: one that brings Hamlet back from his antic disposition, from effete reflection to manly calm, readiness and Christian certainty. To read the play in this way is, I think, to miss the terrible ironies built into the denouement or to follow out the flight from self that Hamlet undergoes, moving from one world of valuation into another; enacting the fact that to vacate the sphere of conscience is death. What Hamlet has finally succeeded in doing is to find a customary method of displacing painful responsibility, deflecting guilt and horror by sanctifying action in the name of special providence. Once this attitude is adopted, acts lose specific distinction and moral differentiation: they are the will of God and the actor is his dutiful servant, reiterating, as Gertrude said to Claudius, as Ophelia said to Polonius and Laertes, "I will obey." Hamlet uses this time-honored panacea, moving as he does so from a figure opposed to his peers, Laertes and Fortinbras, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to a point at which they are, in our view, his doubles.

I do not imply that Shakespeare was an atheist: rather that he understood the uses to which religion could be put; knew every delusive mode of rationalization; saw that man is an agent empowered in perverse

[7]See Maynard Mack, "The World of Hamlet," *The Yale Review*, 41 (1952), 502-23; the introduction to *Hamlet* by Frank Kermode in *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1974), p. 1140; Susan Snyder, *The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare's Tragedies Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello and King Lear* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1979), especially pp. 135-36; J.A. Bryant, *Hippolyta's View* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1961), pp. 116-138.

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ways by belief in a God who watches each individual as an omniscient presence. God is the last abstraction of the duty-demanding Father. Like the ghost, He reiterates, "Remember me." In *Hamlet*, this presence is a professor of the same *lex talionis* which has been the tragic legacy of Cain and the custom established from that time and marked by its recrudescent power over all men who try to live in society, all men who cannot remain within the enclosing intellectual paradise of a Wittenberg. They reside, rather, in that graveyard in which a worker sings at his digging because, as Horatio says, "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness" (5.1.64). Religion of this sort helps men get from one action to the next with a minimum of responsibility; it is one face of that rottenness so detectable in Denmark and is another name for that "monster, custom," which is "proof and bulwark against sense." It is such a world that the New Testament attempts to salvage by prescribing alternatives to the dilemmas which evoke vengeance as solution. While it is St. Matthew who suggests that there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow, that great consolatory answer to death and loss, Christ and his apostles preach non-violence and forgiveness as the ultimate, if greatly difficult, mode of change. It is true that each of us reads *Hamlet* according to our own desires and in accordance with views we might subconsciously wish to find there, and while I accept that probability, it seems to me that the series of analogies constructed into the play, the tying of one set of customs to others, are unambiguous signs of authorial intention. That is, if we can view custom in its specific form of revenge and murder along the arc which Shakespeare provides, an arc which extends from Cain to Hamlet, how can we fail to perceive it as that "imposthume" so insisted upon in the play? And how can we believe that Shakespeare would be sanguine in his view of it? How, then, can we validate the revenge of King Hamlet and the murder of Claudius as healthful acts even though Claudius's murder would seem to have had the potential to inhibit many of the wrongs that devolved from Hamlet's delay? To approve of such an act places us in the same moral category with Fortinbras and Jephthah, although to approve it excuses us from the insoluble questions that attend on refusal to "obey." In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare is dramatizing the case of a superior human being, a true prince, being forced into the terms of an ethos for which he was not fitted and which in and of itself is reprehensible.

I am insisting, then, that even if the revenge ethic, if filial obedience were "natural" to the Elizabethan age, Shakespeare saw through it as he did through all structures and forms conceived and practised by men, and rejected it. To assume that Shakespeare saw as the majority of his contemporaries saw is to deem him incapable of describing, distinguish-

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ing or evaluating as an artist.

Finally, Hamlet both is and is not synonymous with Shakespeare. Both reject revenge. That is, in a classic gesture of refusal to know himself, Hamlet deflects that side of him that does lack gall to make oppression bitter, registers shame at his own delay, and represents the matter not as one of "complementarity," but as a simple problem to which there is only one answer, that dictated by his father. As David Leverenz states in his excellent assessment, "Hamlet's tragedy is the forced triumph of filial duty over sensitivity to his own heart."[8]

Poland, then, is that little plot of ground where speaking turns to anger, anger to violence, where winter prevails and thousands go obediently to their graves for no good reason. It is that *locus* that stands for male violence which, if it cannot go against its original antagonist, if it cannot swoop to revenge with "wings as swift as meditation or the thoughts of love," must supply a substitute. It stands aside from the entire point. Just as King Hamlet smote the "sledded Polacks," as Fortinbras went against Poland, and as Hamlet mistakenly stabbed Polonius—the Polish one—so the larger violences of the play are carried forth, and will be carried forth again and again if one can judge from Hamlet's choice of Fortinbras as his successor and Fortinbras's characteristic staging of Hamlet's funeral as a military salute. Poland is a synonym for all the malignant forms of custom extant in the Danish world and for the inability to fathom the drives that perpetuate them. Like any strongly functioning symbol, Poland also serves to bring various times into one time and various places into one place in order to dramatize its cautionary tale, and to ask us, if we are willing, to imagine the ways in which such a story might be transformed.

[8]David Leverenz, "The Woman in Hamlet: An Interpersonal View," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. by Coppelia Kahn and Murray Schwartz (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1980), p. 111.

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Hamlet: The International Theme

VINCENT F. PETRONELLA

Early in *Hamlet* dramatic tension develops between the homeland and the world abroad. The play makes us highly aware of the contrast between native and foreigner. We not only hear much of foreigners and things foreign but also watch Hamlet himself become a figurative stranger in his own land. Furthermore, the greater geographical contrast between Denmark and other nations corresponds to the more local contrast between Hamlet's inner world and the milieu external to him. "This heavy-headed revel east and west / Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations," he tells Horatio in one striking instance of the international theme (1.3. 17-18).[1] But the play has much more to say about the matter.

The dramatic exposition of the opening scene informs us that Old Hamlet fought two foreign foes; the "sledded Polacks" (1.1.63) and Old Fortinbras of Norway. In the same scene, the Ghost appears: Old Hamlet makes a supernatural return to his homeland as a foreigner, a strange spiritual traveller who is not of this world and certainly no longer of Denmark. As an otherworldly visitor, the Ghost prompts talk of "some strange eruption to our state" and "foreign mart for implements of war" (1.1.69 and 74). The Ghost is now an outsider in almost the same way that Old Fortinbras was an outsider: both men saw

[1]All quotations are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans *et al.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). For a consideration of the historical implications of the international theme, see the following: R.A. Foakes, "Hamlet and the Court of Elsinore" *Shakespeare Survey* 9 (1956), pp. 35-43; Keith Brown, "Hamlet's Place on the Map," *Shakespeare Studies* 4 (1968). pp. 160-82; Gunnar Sjogren, "The Danish Background in *Hamlet*," *Shakespeare Studies* 4 (1968), pp 221-30; and G.K. Hunter, "Elizabethans and Foreigners," *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964), pp. 37-52. This last item is reprinted with some changes in Hunter's *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1978), pp. 3-30. In "Fortinbras and Laertes and the Composition of *Hamlet*," Harold Jenkins says that it is "an important function of the Norwegian prince in Shakespeare to give an international background to the troubles of the Danish court" *(Rice University Studies* 60 [1974], 100). Thanks to R.W. Desai I was made aware, after the completion of my essay, of Ralph Berry's well-written chapter "*Hamlet:* Nationhood and Identity" in *Shakespearean Structures* (London: Macmillan, 1981). Although the approach and conclusions of my study differ, our commentaries offer contrasting perspectives on many of the same details.

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a king of Denmark as an earthly enemy. And, of course, Hamlet himself also sees the present king as an enemy. It is this that places Hamlet in the anguishing position of being a Dane against *the* Dane, the Prince of Denmark against the King of Denmark. This has the effect of estranging Hamlet, forcing him to assume the role of a kind of foreigner, one who assumes the disposition of an antic.

Surrounding Hamlet are several reminders of literal foreignness, not all of them negative representatives of other nations but all of them contributing to a general theme of internationalism. Francisco and Barnardo, for example, bear names that are not Danish; they are probably part of the unit of mercenaries employed by the court. Barnardo, in fact, may be one of the "Swissers" to whom Claudius refers later in the play (4.5.98); and Francisco's name denotes a Spanish or Portugese origin.[2] The sentries' names, along with references to Norwegians and Poles and the appearances of a "foreign" ghostly visitor, help to create, as we shall see, a frame of foreigners around the play.

The second scene is no sooner under way when again we hear of foreigners and foreign lands: Old Fortinbras, Young Fortinbras, the uncle of Young Fortinbras, Norway, France, Germany. And there even may be an anticipation of the Polish campaign in the very name of Polonius.[3] In Norway, Young Fortinbras is stirring and will eventually make his way through Denmark to Poland; in Denmark, Laertes makes a bid through his father to return to Paris; and Hamlet is asked not to return to his studies at Wittenberg. By the end of the scene, Hamlet implies in soliloquy his sense of personal estrangement or foreignness in Denmark. Subsequent scenes present Laertes departing for France to become a foreigner, a Dansker among Parisians, and Hamlet uttering the "dram of ev'l" speech with its concern about Denmark's reputation abroad (1.4.13-38). Hamlet will also encounter the "foreign" Ghost and be moved to estrange himself further by means of the antic disposition. In this guise he, in a sense, says to the world, "as a stranger give [me] welcome" (2.1.165). So while Polonius plans to send Reynaldo (whose name, like those of Barnardo and Francisco, bespeaks a foreign origin)

[2]In his Arden edition of *Hamlet* (London: Methuen, 1982), Harold Jenkins comments on the names of characters immediately following the *Dramatis Personae* (pp. 163-64) and in one of the Longer Notes (pp. 421-23). He refers to Francisco's name as "Italianate" (p. 423); in the strict sense, of course, "Francesco" is the Italian form; whereas "Francisco" may be either Portuguese or Spanish.

[3]The Arden *Hamlet* tells us that "Polonius . . . connects its bearer with Polonia (Poland) and so may have pointed to a recognizable individual" (p. 421) See also Harry Levin, "Shakespeare's Nomenclature" in *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 68.

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to spy on Laertes in Paris and to do so by asking other Danskers about Laertes's social habits (2.1.1-71), Hamlet—the foreigner in his own land—sets out to spy on Claudius and the Danish court.

Central to Hamlet's spying plot is the Mouse-trap play, that snare imported from abroad: "this play is the image of a murther done in Vienna; Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife, Baptista . . . the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian" (3.2.237-263). With Vienna and Italy invoked, a troupe of travelling players, which may have performed in foreign lands, proceeds to bring home to Claudius the fact that crime in other nations can parallel disturbingly national and domestic crime committed within the boundaries of Denmark and within the royal family itself. Giddy with success, Hamlet watches Claudius depart, sings his song of "the strooken deer" with its universalizing conclusion, "Thus runs the world away" (3.2.271-274), and asks Horatio confidently, "Would not this sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial [i.e., French] roses on my raz'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players?" (3.2.275-278). Hamlet cannot resist continuing the international theme with references to the Ottoman Empire and Provencal France. It is another way for him to underscore the concluding line of his lyric: "Thus runs the world away."[4]

The dramatic contrast between native and foreigner, between homeland and abroad, is specified in terms of military conflict as discussed in the opening of the play. And international military affairs continue to confront Denmark, Norway, and Poland as the play proceeds. Recollections of past military campaigns, like those in the first scene, along with orders to prepare military forces for present threats to security and for possible future war with Norway establish and maintain outward unrest and inward concern. It is, of course, Hamlet's particular anxieties that are the focus of dramatic attention, but some part of his emotional state is made emblematic by the tensions between the military forces and political states of Denmark and Norway.

Furthermore, as I indicated earlier, the Norwegian-Danish tension is an international equivalent of the domestic combat between the estranged Hamlet and Claudius *the* Dane. Mistrusting his stepson, Claudius has him sent to a foreign land: England. a place where "[Madness] 'Twill not be seen in him," says the gravedigger, for "there the men are as mad as he" (5.1.154-155). Ironically the statement associates Hamlet's madness, his antic disposition with foreignness. And that the gravedigger does not know that he is speaking to the Prince of Denmark

[4]See my "Watch and Ward in *Hamlet*," *Hamlet Studies* 1 (1979), 135-36.

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is a further reminder that Hamlet is still removed, still "foreign" in his own land. To be sure, the antic disposition has now faded, but Hamlet still has to establish his own selfhood. It should come as no surprise, then, that he identifies himself vigorously at Ophelia's gravesite: "This is I, Hamlet the Dane!" (5.1.257-258). Defiantly he trumpets selfhood and national origin in order to punctuate his disgust with the estrangement he experiences in his own land. Past pressures forced him to play the role of "foreigner," but now he is proclaiming that he is no longer a stranger. As he says in the letter to Claudius: "High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked in your kingdom" (4.7.43-44). The figuratively naked Hamlet represents a born-again Hamlet, a born-again Dane. Hamlet has returned from abroad and from the world of the antic disposition.

Back in Denmark after the great adventure at sea, Hamlet is ready for a fresh start in the matter of Claudius. In the meantime, Claudius flatters Laertes with remarks supposedly made by the foreign "gentleman of Normandy" regarding Laertes's ability with a rapier: "A Norman was't? . . . Upon my life, Lamord" (4.7.81-91). With the international theme well established, the play moves quickly to a conclusion after the brief interlude with Osric, who delivers the terms of the fencing match. And even here the international theme is heard with Osric's and Hamlet's talk of Barbary horses and French swords (147-164). Osric himself, we understand, is a hotch-potch of foreign dress and manners. Like the Englishman Falconbridge who seeks Portia's hand in *The Merchant of Venice*, Osric is "oddly . . . suited"; one who has "bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere" (*Merch.* 1.2.73-76).[5] Osric's obsesssion with things foreign is seen in his amusingly "conceited" language drawn from continental cartography: "[Laertes] is the card or calendar [i.e. map, chart, or guidebook] of gentry; for you shall find him the continent of what part a gentleman would see" (5.2.109-11). The comic key of the Osric-scene does not mislead the reader or viewer of the play, for things foreign still pose a threat to Hamlet; and although he has "gain-giving" (5.2.226) about present events, he defies augury and awaits Laertes, who

[5]In the BBC-TV/Time-Life version of *Hamlet*, the Prince (played by Derek Jacobi) demolishes Osric's pretentious cosmopolitanism by comically delivering words such as "perdition," "infusion," "semblable," and "umbrage" with a heavy French accent during one of the responses to the foppish courtier (5.2.112-120). Berry sees "simultaneous derision and masked respect" in the "Frenchified" diction of this scene (See n. 1 above, p. 38). By contrast, I see it as an indication of Hamlet's disgust with the pretentiousness of foreign fashion that can turn native Danes into strangers.

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has returned from Paris and who has been praised, so Claudius says, by the Norman Lamord. Hamlet, fresh from an aborted sea-voyage to England, and Laertes, fresh from France, move the play to its catastrophe with their French swords. Two Danes, both of them trailing clouds of recent international experience, are matched in a Machiavellian game of cat and mouse; and both are trapped.

The military and political victor is a foreigner, a young Norwegian prince with a French name. Fortinbras embodies internationalism. He has just come from Poland, and unlike Hamlet and Laertes, those two other recent travellers, Fortinbras deals with the problems of Denmark and survives. Even Horatio is about to renounce his life and nationality: "I am more an antique Roman than a Dane" (5.2.341). But Hamlet's wishes prevail, and Horatio the Dane will live to "draw [his] breath in pain / To tell [Hamlet's] story" (5.2.348-349). At this point a climactic recapitulation of international concerns occurs: the Norwegian prince has come from conquest in Poland; and the English ambassadors arrive from abroad to announce the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (349-380). What is more, in wishing to tell the "unknowing world" (379) about recent events in Denmark, Horatio is referring not only to uninformed Danes but also to those uninformed foreigners in the world out there where the ambassadors, Laertes, Fortinbras, and Hamlet have come from after a period of travel. All the world will come to know that a non-Dane has become the ruler of Denmark; that a foreigner triumphs politically in Denmark. The Danish royal family has been wiped out; so has the Danish family of Polonius. Denmark is indeed swamped by the World. It is the outside world, the outside force, that prevails.

Fortinbras is the secular or Machiavellian counterpart of that outside force that Hamlet speaks of in scriptural terms as the "special providence" (5.2.219-220). The Outer Mystery that is providence places Hamlet's ego in the perspective of a larger, distinctly metaphysical, framework. Analogously, the might of Fortinbras creates for Denmark a new perspective at the political level. The dramatic frame of foreigners is complete: the Ghost of the old king and the soldiers Barnardo and Francisco in the opening scene are complemented structurally by the English ambassadors and, more importantly, by Fortinbras the new king and his soldiers in the closing scene. The frame is not only a part of but also the container for an international theme that helps to generate the universal sweep of a play whose tragic protagonist tells us, "Thus runs the world away."

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Princeps Arte Ambulandi: The Pace of Hamlet

(A Metadramatic Excursus)

R. F. FLEISSNER

"There struts Hamlet"
—W.B. Yeats

The meaning of *Hamlet*, it is now generally conceded, is not merely the character of the Prince but what he does, not inaction but action. My purpose, therefore, is to reconsider the play in terms of an active metaphor. Since most of the activity consists in his pacing about, my study will perforce be not so much concerning a "running metaphor" as about a "walking metaphor." Still, I feel compelled to confess that I find no all-pervasive theme of perambulation, meditative or otherwise, operative in the tragedy. The allusions to the art of walking represent only one motif in the overall construct. Yet my study will have the merit of helping the reader to focus not merely on entrances and exits, of course, but on the plot through what might be called metadramatic contrapuntal movement. Since the play considered as metaphor appeals to the student of drama in more than a theatrical way (what spectator looks for dominant metaphors?), the qualification *metadramatic* seems appropriate.

Let us commence with a historical comment to set the scene. Paul A. Jorgensen writes of the tragedy as follows:

> Like Eliot, I do not believe that there is adequate explanation *within* the play for the vehemence of Hamlet's emotion. . . . Frankly, then, this is not so much an essay on *Hamlet* as an essay on the intellectual background of the play; an urgency, an impatience in spirit that characterizes what I call the restless Renaissance.[1]

"The restless Renaissance." Such an appeal to intellectual history helps account for the tempo of the tragedy, perhaps even for the rashness of the Prince's fatal actions. Seen in this light, Hamlet is not merely a melancholy Dane, but a truly masculine figure who strides with zeal and equipoise upon the boards of the stage.

[1]"Hamlet and the Restless Renaissance," in *Shakespearean Essays*, ed. Alwin Thaler and Norman Sanders (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1964), p. 131.

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I

Before examining *Hamlet* proper, we might initially scan the use of walking in other dramas to see how it relates not only to the age but to all times as a universal motif. To begin, in *As You Like It*, the Forest of Arden is depicted as providing ample ground for foot exercise; further sauntering about occurs in *Much Ado*, the relaxed atmosphere of the romantic comic genre easily lending itself to descriptions of strolling companions. In a tragedy like *Hamlet*, however, where walking involves a greater amount of decision-making or control, a production may be taken to task for any over-emphasis upon meaningless pacing. I have heard the Olivier film criticized for just such aimless meandering: characters spend much too much time walking down long romantic corridors and up and down staircases for theatrical rather than purely dramatic effect. But if walking may be distracting to a movie audience, it has its point on the stage; members of the theatrical profession have traditionally been called "Splendid Strollers." And Shakespeare himself endorsed it in *The Winter's Tale*, "Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way" (4.3.118).[2]

Therefore we have no reason to feel that we should be chided if we consider *Hamlet* a "pedestrian" play in the best sense of the word. For, surely, if perambulation has its merits as a sportive activity, its use in the play can be singled out and related to what might be called the tradition of the cultivated pace. Already in early classical times walking was associated with contemplative activity: Socrates and Plato paced up and down in the stoas of the Acropolis; Aristotle's school has been dubbed Peripatetic. In Hebrew times, Christ taught His disciples by talks-walking, by engaging in spiritual excursions with them—indeed an active phase of His ministry, for which we may refer to Alexander Whyte's treatise, *The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord*.[3]

Since the Church is Christ's Body, His walk may be thought of as responsible for the Crusades, which entailed considerable dependence on shank's mare (as well as armoured mare), *the* traditional Crusader having been the pace-setter Peter the Hermit. Even though walking as a sophisticated pastime came into its own largely in the eighteenth century, when the mercantile classes had more time for such leisure, and then even more prominently in the nineteenth century if we are to judge

[2]Citations to Shakespeare are to *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, gen. ed. Alfred Harbage (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969).

[3]New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905. Cf. *Walking With God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1955).

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by the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Dickens (the *flâneur*), Jusserand tells of "wayfarers" on English roads in the fourteenth century. During the Elizabethan period, although the art of walking did not call for special comment in the courtesy books, not being one of the indulgences in sport required by the "compleat" Renaissance man, no doubt it was considered a dignified pursuit.

In the theater the controlling of the foot muscles in the form of the measured pace began to achieve prominence in Shakespeare's time—harking back to Greek times when actors performed on stilts. Pacing became more concentrated in the meditative soliloquy when the actor strode about with controlled deliberation. In later centuries walking was indulged in more for purposes of diversion and occasional emotional gratification, not usually for those philosophical or even theological motives imputed to the Danish hero (romantic maundering notwithstanding).

If Hamlet truly represents *princeps arte ambulandi* (Prince in the Art of Walking), it is helpful to inspect those elements in his tragedy which have a bearing on striding as an art. At the outset, let us dismiss as the height of bad taste any such superficial view as that the Prince's pseudo-procrastination amounted to a kind of dilatory horsing or shuffling around. What is of import is his rumination, his thinking while pacing—indeed, a form of meditation that would serve to make what Jorgensen calls the "restless Renaissance" meaningful in its very restlessness. Let us take one episode as an example, the reading scene (2.2).

Enter the pensive Dane, book in hand. But what kind of tome would interest him enough to encourage such measured strides, such deliberative pacing? "You know sometimes he walks four hours together / Here in the lobby," is Polonius's observation (2.2.160-1). The answer is not found in John Lyly's *Euphues*, who wrote that "gentlemen use books as gentlewomen handle their flowers, who in the morning stick them in their heads, and at night straw them at their heels."[4] It is better described universally by Robert Louis Stevenson, in his *Virginibus Puerisque*, who tells of the value of perusing a new book during an excursion: "You find the language strangely racy and harmonious; words take [on] a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half an hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the

[4]Cited from the Preface to John Lyly, *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wyt*, in *Life in Shakespeare's England*, compiled by John Dover Wilson (London: Penguin, 1954), p. 195.

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nicest coincidence of sentiment."[5] Hardly Hamlet's frame of mind? Let us see.

Hamlet too was trying to take spiritual comfort in his reading-walk. Surely that is the reason why Hardin Craig called the book the Prince is reading Cardan's *Comforte*, a neo-Stoic work. Other suggestions that have been made include Montaigne's *Essays* and Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*.[6] Although the dramatist does not tells us what the book is (albeit a hint is given that it might be by Juvenal),[7] a director is obliged to give the hero some kind of stage property. If this book is to be thought of as conforming to Hamlet's thought patterns, the choice is somewhat limited. My favorite submission is that he might be carrying a Bible, especially since he was a student at Luther's Wittenberg, and pondering differences between Old and New Testament passages. Whether a Bible would be too ponderous in those days for him to carry poses a problem, and a classical writer who appealed to his satiric wit might be a safer choice.

Let us return to the general theme of peripatetics. What Hamlet is reading is important only in that it provides a basis for a theatrical technique and then a metadramatic effect, namely the counterpoint of action followed or preceded by meditative reaction.

II

The theme of pacing is central not only to the plot of this play but to the effect upon the spectator. Robert Speaight, in commenting on David Warner's Hamlet in a *Shakespeare Quarterly* review, observed that "the performance has now a sequence and fluidity, above all a pace. . . ."[8] Although he was not using the word *pace* in the literal, physical sense, we can agree. This production was one of the best I have seen at Stratford-upon-Avon, as also one of the best *Hamlets*—in spite of my distaste for Warner's flipping Yorick's skull irreverently back

[5]"Walking Tours" from *Virginibus Puerisque* as cited in Aaron Sussman and Ruth Goode, eds., *The Magic of Walking* (New York: Great Western Railway, 1933), p. 238.

[6]See Frank McCombie, " 'Hamlet' and the 'Moriae Encomium,' " *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), p. 67 (citing Harry Levin, *The Question of Hamlet*, pp. 118-19).

[7]The phrase the Prince uses to describe what he is reading ("the satirical rogue says here" 2.2.195) perhaps suggests the Roman satirist Juvenal rather than a less roguish one like Montaigne or Erasmus, but it is not necessary to take him literally. For further comment, see the correspondence in the *TLS*, 27 March 1969, p. 328.

[8]"Shakespeare in Britain," *SQ*, 17 (1966), 395.

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into the grave.

"Above all a pace." The Prince is the pacemaker. As such, he ought to have the chief qualification of a walker, a merry heart:

> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad tires in a mile-a.
>
> (*WT*, 4.3.121)[9]

But this characteristic the Prince, brooding over the murder of his father and duly clad in dark garments, does not possess. His walking posture is saturnine. Yet the metaphor of walking does relate to his eventual self-realization. Upon his return to Denmark from England, his sense of latent determinism paradoxically enables him to proceed more dexterously afoot. To some introspective souls, recognition of God's foreknowledge (if not foreordination) might lead to inaction or frustration, but the noble Princes's acceptance of Horatio's stoicism gives him more self-assurance. Why, if nothing can be done about fate *per se*, still something can lead to better behavior day by day. Hector, he would recall, knows that he will lose and determines to fight anyway, achieving a limited amount of heroism in so doing; Satan, knowing he has not a chance against the Lord, fights anyway, losing his heroic initial stature through the heroics of daredeviltry. Hamlet relates to this Promethean Satan figure in daring to kill the anointed king in exacting blood revenge, crying out for hot blood to drink.

To accommodate the metaphor of walking or pacing to the play as a whole, let us consider it in various stages. In so doing, we need recall that in spite of the eighteenth-century version of the Prince in chamois shoes, it is doubtful that his walk ever acquires what Vachel Lindsay so happily described somewhere as "the pure delight of rhythmically placing one foot before the other." He may be regarded as first walking with a slight stoop, owing to his sense of bereavement, then as regaining his proper footing slowly throughout the course of the action, finally as improving on his posture and ending up "dying with his boots on," not colloquially but literally. No dallying by the wayside for this Dane when the final call to duty was revealed! In muttering to Horatio about the special providence in the fall of a sparrow, nonetheless, he could

[9]This description of what has been called the "gleesome saunter" has been found particularly Shakespearean. For example, Charles Coleman Stoddard, in *Shanks' Mare* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), writes: " 'We think of Shakespeare's bland, oval face, the light of a smile spread over it, and Ben Jonson's truculent visage, and Beaumont and Fletcher sitting together in their beautiful friendship'—vagabonds all" (p. 186). Cf. Hugh Edward Page, *Rambles and Walking Tours in Shakespeareland and the Cotswolds* (London: Great Western Railway, 1933).

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have meditatively paused to be aware of wayside flocks fluttering overhead. A man of natural law indeed.

Finally, that he took keen interest in the subject of taking constitutionals (for his health indeed) may have come from the allusions to *Julius Caesar* in the play. At least that was what was on Shakespeare's mind. What Marc Antony tells of Caesar to the Roman citizenry bears on the Danish tragedy too:

> he hath left you all his walks,
> His private arbors and new-planted orchards,
> On this side Tiber; he hath left them to you,
> And to your heirs forever—common pleasures,
> To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
> (3.2.247-51)

"To walk abroad." Hamlet had to do some walking abroad when he left for England and returned on a pirate vessel. His melancholy saunter, so to speak, turned into a pretty fast pace when he encountered villainy and then piracy on the high seas. As Caesar wanted his predecessors to do, Hamlet walks abroad and recreates himself—by literally re-creating his own image.

III

What about the structure of imagery relating to walking in the play? To make a definitive evaluation of the Hamlet pace would entail nothing less than a critical pedometer. This much can be claimed with some certainty: if walking constitutes a form of escape, both from outer and inner worlds, the Prince's pacing is essentially not escapist. The reason is that he is making unconscious use of the NOT-THINK ZEN MECHANISM.[10]

Such a claim may appear startling in the light of his usual meditative posture, but it works. The mechanism is based on the vital notion that mystical pauses existing between individual paces may be of greater value than the thought process itself. The so-called "Mechanism of Not-Think" is defined this way, for rhythmic walking has the effect of opening up large areas of the mind hitherto unassailable. True thinking would then follow the foot exercise, not be an actual part of it. The mechanism consists of three stages:

1. State the problem.
2. Forget it.
3. Wait.

[10]Cited by Sussman and Goode (n. 5 above), pp. 100-1.

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Hamlet's predicament is related in this way: (1) In his soliloquies he states the problem (the main issue being the Prince himself); (2) in putting on his "antic disposition" or in feigning madness, he inclines to forget his problem (at least superficially); (3) in biding his time after his return to Denmark ("the interim is mine," he says), he resolves not to fret but rather to wait his problem out. Such waiting, considered in terms of Zen, is not escapist. After all, the pauses between bodily movements can be as important as the movements themselves. After his sea-trip Hamlet is a changed man, ripened, a more cautious Dane than he was when he made his all-too-literal stab-in-the-dark, slaying the old counsellor. That he is confident in quickening his step upon touching Danish soil again is evident from his scuffle in Ophelia's grave with Laertes. Then he expands his gait still more during a fast-paced fencing match. The tempo of his pace increases till he succumbs at the end of his path.

It might be contended that Hamlet walked from a specific point on Danish shores to Elsinore since in the graveyard scene he alludes to having kibes. Yet it is difficult to plot the extent of his perambulations through the use of a map. It might, incidentally, be better recalled that Shakespeare himself, as a youth, was quite a "lightfoot walker"; he easily traversed the path connecting Stratford with Shottery when he went courting Anne Hathaway along the hedgerows and turnip patches. For is it not curious that Shakespeare's very name suggests the human animal as walker? The shaker of the spear is, in a sense, a metaphor for man as cane-carrying animal. As Robert Cortes Holliday remarks, in *Walking-stick Papers*, "The spear, the stave, the pilgrim's staff, the sword, the sceptre—always has the cane-carrying animal borne something in his hand."[11] The man who has his walking stick, as we may imagine the dramatist during his mellowing years at New Place, is a pacer in deed.

[11]New York: George H. Doran, 1918, p. 14.

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Narratives, Narrators and Narratees in *Hamlet*

ROBERT R. WILSON

As it is the play that seems to be richest in dramatic complexity, *Hamlet* is also the richest in narrative materials, the most central to any discussion of narrative in Shakespeare. It is a remarkable network of narrative techniques and playfulness: all the fundamental conventions of story-telling emerge from its text with unmistakable clarity. Furthermore, *Hamlet* is at least as self-conscious concerning the narrative conventions that it embodies as it is about the dramatic conventions that it, perhaps more notably, displays. Stories and ears, one must observe, are everywhere in *Hamlet*.

Narrative pervades Shakespeare's plays. Characters tell each other stories with avidity and in extremely intricate ways. A polyphonic orchestration of voices, each telling his (or her) separate story, constitutes Shakespearean drama. One could legitimately apply to Shakespeare's plays the phrase that Tzvetan Todorov uses to describe the characters of the *Arabian Nights:* "a character is a potential story that is the story of his life. Every new character signifies a new plot. We are in the realm of narrative-men."[1] And thus it seems in Shakespeare: the characters have stories to tell (though not, always, of their own lives), tell them often, always with hearers, an audience of rapt or disbelieving narratees.[2] Like the *Arabian Nights*, Shakespeare's plays create a world of

[1]*The Poetics of Prose*, tr. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 70.

[2]The critical terminology of this analysis follows that of Gérard Genette. It seems more lucid, though certainly less relaxed, than the customary terminology of Anglo-American criticism. Genette's critical vocabulary, though it is evidently "bristling" as Robert Alter remarks *(The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1981], p. x), is useful in that it accounts for conceptual distinctions that otherwise lack available terms. Genette himself refers to his vocabulary as an "arsenal" that will grow out of fashion "the more quickly the more seriously it is taken, that is, debated, tested, and revised with time." See *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, tr. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 263. For further discussion of Genette's model for narrative analysis, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1983). Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse; Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), and Christine Brooke-Rose, *A Rhetoric of The Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of The Fantastic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 3-51, 311-38. I make no apologies for the narratological vocabulary of this paper: it must be taken as a small contribution to the testing that has been going on.

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narrative-men. Not only are embedded narratives both frequent and varied within the plays, but there are also two major narrative poems in Shakespeare's work, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, either one of which could instruct a reader that he knew an immense amount about narrative practice and, it may be, narrative theory as well. Since this is the case, it must seem only obvious that scholars will have written extensively on narrative in Shakespeare. Like the ideal bibliography of *Hamlet* that is held to be larger than the London telephone directory (or twice the size of the Warsaw one), the bibliography of Shakespearean narrative must be vast indeed.[3]

Nothing could be more obvious, and nothing less the case. Not only have few scholars discussed the narrative poems, and few isolated the embedded narratives of the plays as narrative and not dramatic writing, but fewer still have taken narrative (what it is, how it works, its properties, its conventions, narrative *qua* narrative) as a single problem, an area of analysis, a possible field for conceptual discussion. Rather, there seems normally to have been a tendency to disprize Shakespeare's narrative, as if it detracts from the miraculous power of the drama or marks (somehow) a deficiency in his dramatic technique. Dr. Johnson seems largely representative of Shakespearean criticism in his active dislike of the narrative passages in Shakespeare's plays. "In narration," Johnson writes, Shakespeare "affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in a few." He continues to put this judgment into a perspective (common enough) that sees drama as superior to narrative; and Shakespeare's talents, and perhaps his obligations also, as concentrated in his dramatic genius alone. "Narration," he adds, "in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumberance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour."[4] This does not appear to be an eccentric critical position. If anything, Johnson's view is essentially typical of traditional scholarship: Shakespeare has been insufficiently admired for his narrative art.

[3]Many studies of the two non-dramatic narrative poems have been written. Louis (A. Zocca's *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1950; rpt. 1970), though still a major work of scholarship, does not consider Shakespeare's narratives as a whole. He does not discuss the embedded narratives of the plays.

[4]"Preface to Shakespeare" (1768), in *The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.*, vol. 5 Oxford: Talboys and Wheeler, 1825), p. 117.

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Yet this is surely a strange attitude. Narrative, after all, is the basic mode of literature and it was the esteemed mode in Shakespeare's age.[5] When Sidney or Scaliger discuss poetry they have in mind narrative poetry. Spenser precisely frames the *Faerie Queene*, in his "Letter" to Raleigh, as a narrative to be read, and judged, within a context (created by "all the antique poets historical") of past narrative. Shakespearean narrative, whether in the two long poems or in the embedded narratives of the plays, reflects an immense skill, and not merely the skill in dramatic construction and in poetic phrasing, and an uncanny awareness of how stories have been told and can be told, of why they are told and how they are heard. Shakespeare's realm of narrative-men is complex, labyrinthine and playful.

In this paper I shall argue that, within Shakespeare's drama, narrative is both pervasive and integral. Furthermore, it is inescapably playful. To call Shakespeare's narratives "playful" is to make a purely formal point concerning both the manner in which they are written and their evident aspects of authorial self-consciousness. For example, the embedded narratives possess distinctive structures: analyzable conventions that play (and are played with) within the narratives. To make this claim is only to assert that Shakespeare's narratives reflect an awareness of their conventions; an awareness, that is, of their conditions, their scope and their inherent literariness.[6] (It has become a com-

[5]Studies of Renaissance education indicate the importance given to rhetoric. The emphasis upon narrative would seem to have been a consequence of the great models of the past having been themselves narrative. Sister Miriam Joseph observes that the "boys would memorize Ovid's *Metamorphoses* at the rate of twelve lines a week, five hundred lines a year, for two or more years." See her *Shakespeare's Use of The Arts of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947). p. 10. The theoretical disputes of the sixteenth century centred around narrative, in particular the narrative poetry of Ariosto and Tasso. Sidney in the *Defense*, clearly has narrative in mind. Spenser, in the "Letter" to Raleigh, leaves no doubt that he perceives his narrative task to meet its standards, and to make its claims, within a context of previous narrative poetry. Neither his stanza nor his metrics as such seem, judging from the "Letter," to have given rise to equivalent problems.

[6]The concept of "play" in literature has taken a number of forms in recent criticism ranging from the taxonomical to the highly analytical. Authors, works (both as form and as empirical content) and readers have all been subjected to ludic analysis according to a variety of methods. For bibliographies, directive footnotes and discussion, see Robert R. Wilson, "Three Prolusions: Toward a Game Model in Literary Theory," *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 8: 1 (Winter, 1981), 79-92 and "Godgames and Labyrinths: The Logic of Entrapment," *Mosaic: A Journal for The Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 14:4 (December 1982), 1-22. *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* will devote a forthcoming issue (12: 2, 1985) to essays on the range of play and game concepts in literature and available

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monplace in contemporary literary theory to call such an explicit consciousness of the way in which a story is being told "metafictional," "self-conscious," or "narcissistic": all versions of textual playfulness, itself a quality of literature that is always available, neither contemporary nor ancient). The argument of this paper will focus closely upon *Hamlet*, richly complex in its narrative conventions, in order to suggest the general applicability of the analysis.

Hamlet begins with a double action: men peer into the darkness and they ask questions. Darkness, peering, and the asking of questions interweave throughout the play. *Hamlet* seems extraordinary in the sheer number of questions that are asked. There are well over four hundred grammatical questions and this figure does not include the several instances when there is a series of queries governed by a single question mark, as in Marcellus's series of five queries (1.1.73-82; Arden Edition, ed. Harold Jenkins [London: Methuen, 1982], p. 170. All further references will be to this edition). Nor does the number of actual grammatical questions indicate the many questions that are not put as questions: the puzzles, the aporia, the mere (and many) riddles that run through the play. Still less, it does not indicate the interesting use of the word "question" itself, as when Horatio refers to the royal dead, which Fortinbas had called a "quarry," as "this bloody question" (5.2.380). Now to ask a question is to request, or demand, an account, an explanation, one evident form of which can be a narrative. Horatio, for example, replies to Marcellus by telling a story (1.1.83-110) in which an important exposition is unfolded. Nowhere does the impression of narrative-men, the sense that the essence of characterdom lies in the possession of, and the request for, stories, seem so strong as in *Hamlet*. The initial double action (which, of course, continues and comes to dominate the play) of peering and querying calls for narrative solutions. The very word that Francisco uses in the second line of the play, "unfold," suggests that action of story-telling (and an interpretation of that action) and anticipates the Ghost's double use of the same word (1.5.6,15). Narratives, like time (cf *King Lear*, 1.1.280), unfold their, and form their, intricacies.

Queries and the need for narrative dominate the beginning of *Hamlet*. Act I, scene i, contains two narratives, both of which Horatio tells. The first is directly expository (why there are preparations for war in Denmark) while the second, expository as well, is deeply allusive (what happened in the "high and palmy state of Rome, / A little ere the migh-

for literary criticism; it will contain an annotated bibliography of relevant books and articles.

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tiest Julius fell"). It seems significant that Horatio tells both of these narratives: the play ends with Horatio telling the story of the play in summary form (5.2.383-391) and preparing to tell it again, in indefinite reiteration, to the world. One may suppose that, given the close linkage between narrative, characterization and drama in Shakespeare, there is a correlation between Horatio's stable characterization and his function as a narrator. There is a process of education in the play through which he becomes capable of telling the final version of the Ghost's recursive tale.

The second scene of *Hamlet* begins with Claudius giving further exposition, though it does not touch the same details that Horation's narratives give. Moreover, it is vitiated by Claudius's personal investment in the narration. This is the initial suggestion, within *Hamlet*, that narratives can be falsified, that the demand for a story to light the darkness may be met by lies. (Delusion can always be a narrative effect.) This soon becomes the central narrative concept: stories may be lies and the ears of their hearers poisoned.

The Ghost's narrative (1.5) begins with the unexceptional request that his audience (Hamlet) "Lend thy serious hearing / To what I shall unfold" (5-6). The word "hearing" is immediately echoed in the double repetition of the word "hear" and the word "unfold" is repeated within ten lines. Thus the Ghost's narrative skills are impressive: he commands attention by describing the effects upon his audience of the story that he could tell ("I could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood. . . .") and then closes the narrative before he tells it with the remark that it cannot be told "To ears of flesh and blood" (23). The Ghost then urges his hearer to listen, with a three-times reiterated use of the word "list," to a different tale. From this it is clear both that the Ghost knows how to command attention and that he knows how much the prosperity of a narrative lies in the ear of him who hears it. Rosaline's observation on the nature of jesting in *Love's Labour's Lost* (5.2.851-3) might be taken as axiomatic for any discussion of Shakespearean narrative. Ears are always noted, their presence assumed, and their attentiveness conjured.[7]

[7]Ears are always a part of Shakespearean narrative. In *Venus and Adonis*, for example, as Venus begins to court Adonis she "tunes her tale" to Adonis' "pretty" (though inattentive) ear (74). Antony, preparing to tell the Roman populace the story of Caesar's generous spirit, entreats them, "Lend me your ears" (*JC*, 3.2.73) which recalls Grumio's command to Curtis, "Lend thine ear" (*TS*, 3.2.52). Desdemona, Othello claims, listened to his tales with a "greedy ear" (1.3.149-50) devouring up his discourse. Prospero interrupts his expository narrative to ask Miranda if she hears him and she replies, "Your tale, sir, would cure deafness" (*Temp.* 1.2.106).

[Contd.

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Furthermore, there is, in the Ghost's story-telling, an indication that narrative craft depends upon suggesting larger possibilities than can be actualized in particular narratives: story is invariably more extensive than discourse and strong effects can be generated by playing upon this distinction.[8] Next the Ghost identifies the falsifying powers of narrative. Claudius has told false stories (not the same false story that he tells in the second scene) which have poisoned the ear of Denmark. The analogy is between the king's poisoned ear and the corrupting consequences of narrative falsehood. The Ghost then tells his second story (the one that he can tell but the effects of which he has not described) and that story is a microcosmic account of what Claudius has done to the State. (He poisons ears, "So the whole ear of Denmark / Is . . . / Rankly abus'd" 1.5.36-38.) The Ghost's immediate narratee (Hamlet) believes his narrative but later finds reasons to doubt it. This, too, seems like a comment upon the nature of narrative. Its effects can be powerful, can fill the ear and carry away an audience, but later, in a cool hour, doubts can appear. Since the narrative gives rise to doubts it must (in *Hamlet)* be tested. This prompts the recursive convention of retelling (dumb-show, the Mousetrap, the story that Hamlet says he has told Horatio but which is not told in the play, the story that Horatio will eventually

The references to ears are many (attend "with patient ears" the prologue of *Romeo and Juliet* urges its audience) but they always indicate Shakespeare's awareness that a narrative's prosperity lies in the ear of the hearer, not upon the tongue of the narrator, and for this reason it is not surprising that the role of the narratee (he who listens, whose ears count) should have so much importance in his dramatic presentations of narrative acts and contracts.

[8]The distinction between story and discourse seems basic to formal analyses of literature and perhaps to common sense as well. The distinction between a *what* and a *way* is implicit in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Contemporary discussion of the distinction has been both wide-spread and incisive. The Russian Formalists, particularly Victor Shklovsky and Boris Tomashevsky, formulated the distinction in something like its current form, though they made the distinction in a more limited manner between "story" *(fabula)* and "plot" *(sjuzet)*. See, Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, eds., Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 66-78. For a discussion of the Russian Formalists' position, see Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 238-43. Jonathan Culler argues, in what is an eminently rational discussion of the distinction, that "story" is only a "heuristic fiction." See his *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 170. The extent to which "story" may be more than a "heuristic fiction" (a discoverable prototype, an archetype, or a set of motifs, for example) is one of the vexed problems in current literary studies. Chatman's analysis of the problem in *Story and Discourse* is among the most informative discussions (see n. 2 above).

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tell but does not do so within the play. the summary version that Horatio does actually tell) running through the play.

In *Hamlet* recursiveness and reflexivity are literary conventions (or, perhaps, meta-conventions) that are *essentially* in the play's foreground. While both are purely literary conventions that may be present in any mode of literature, from Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* to Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (and most clearly including all the "play within the play" situation in Shakespeare), they belong to the history of narrative as primary and constitutive parts. Both recursiveness and reflexivity function in *Hamlet* as dramatic (the Mousetrap, the comments upon acting and so forth) *and* as narrative conventions. The latter is the point, easy to miss for students who have learned to think exclusively in dramatic terms, that one must underscore.

Recursiveness literally indicates a rerunning: in narrative, a story that is picked up again and retold, usually in a modified version (but a series that could be infinite, as in classic shaggy dog stories) such that there is both an incremental effect, as the story becomes more familiar through restatement, and an aesthetic effect, as the teller's command of the story-materials becomes increasingly evident. For example, the story that is told in *Romeo and Juliet* occurs in three versions with a fourth untold version in the final scene. First, there is a prologue (a narrative sonnet), then there is the action of the play itself. then there is the summary of the action that Friar Lawrence narrates, and finally there is the suggestion that the story will never be forgotten (that is, it will be retold again and again). The narrative recursiveness in *Romeo and Juliet* corresponds to the three versions of the story in *The Rape of Lucrece* (which also concludes with the suggestion of many extra-textual retellings). On the other hand, reflexivity is simply the convention by which a writer calls attention to the nature of the literary act itself. To write a sonnet that calls attention to itself as a sonnet, as Sidney does, or to write a play that self-consciously asserts its existence as a play, as Shakespeare does in *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* (and elsewhere), are equally reflexive acts. Such acts of literary reflexivity create playful effects much like (to cite a notorious parallel) those that Velázquez achieves when, in *Las Meninas*, he paints himself painting the very work into which he has incorporated himself. Hence narrative reflexivity acknowledges itself as narrative, draws attention to the fact, gloats and plays, even perhaps whirling in a semiotic dance of its own construction, within the larger boundaries of some narrative whole.[9]

[9]Reflexivity is that literary act in which a text refers to itself either explicitly (by self-reference) or implicitly (by genre or convention reference). It is one aspect of

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Both recursiveness and reflexivity are varieties of playfulness: an author must understand well the conventions of his craft in order to play with, and through, them.

A striking instance of narrative playfulness occurs when Hamlet asks the Player King (2.2) to recite Aeneas's tale to Dido. Immediately, a number of extremely complex narrative moves are brought into play. First, the narrative seems to be in a style other than Shakespeare's: a bombastic flow that has struck critics as (presumably) a parody of earlier narrative, and declamatory, styles in English drama (those, no doubt, that are parodied in Bottom's comments upon the style of "Ercles' vein," the lofty rhetoric needed to tear a cat in [*MND*. 1.2.35]). Second, the narrative does not appear to have been written by anyone other than Shakespeare himself. "It is strange," Harold Jenkins observes, "that distinguished critics have ever seriously maintained that Shakespeare lifted from some old tragedy, his own or another's, a speech so manifestly designed for the place it has in *Hamlet*."[10] If this is the case, then the narrative of Aeneas's tale to Dido is an imitation but not a copy. It is similar to those narratives in *Don Quixote* (I, 50; II, 28; II, 50) in which the Knight tells typical romance tales that are not copies from any specific source but are seen as typical because they reflect an understanding of the precise conventions of that kind of tale. (They are original chivalric tales told by a narrator, the Knight, who fully understands the relevant conventions.) Third, the narrative is performed in two voices, Hamlet's and the Player King's. Like the tale left hanging

meta-fiction but not, in my view, the only one. It can be called "autocritique" or, by an extension of the term, self-parody. Some of the most interesting recent discussion of the concept appears in Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Godel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Basic Books, 1979). However, one must bear in mind that Hofstadter conflates reflexivity and recursiveness: only the later term appears in his index. (This is a possible conceptual strategy: still, even if all recursiveness is reflexive, it does not follow that all reflexivity is recursive. I would argue for separating the terms, though nonetheless appealing to Hofstadter's discussion for clarification). In his *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Jonathan Culler discusses the concept adroitly although he refers to it as "self-reference" (pp. 200-5). Once again, there is nothing incorrect in calling the meta-fictional act in question "self-reference." However, the term "reflexivity" allows one to describe parts, elements or aspects of a literary work, while "self-reference" appears to make a claim about the whole of the work. *Hamlet*, for instance, threads a number of reflexive elements into its embedded narratives but it would be something of a misreading to assert that the play as a whole was "self-referential" in any sense other than the nugatory one that must hold true for all art. By whatever name, reflexivity is an important concept and belongs to narrative analysis.

[10] *Hamlet*, "The Arden Shakespeare" (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 479.

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by Touchstone and then completed by Jaques (*AYLI*, 2.7. 12-43) in his discourse upon the Seven Ages, it is a narrative with two narrators. As such it calls reflexively to mind an important narrative principle: that anyone can tell and retell old stories and that narrative, however idiosyncratic, can then speak in the reading vioces of any number of readers. Anyone can read, and narrate, anyone else's story. In the universe of stories, as Lucrece makes plain in appropriating *another* tale of Troy (*RL*, 1366-1568), no one owns a story.[11]

It should already seem that the embedded narrative of Aeneas's tale is labyrinthine (in structure, purposes, allusiveness and manner) and could be dismissed only foolishly as, say, non-dramatic, poor narrative, mere bombast or simple parody.[12] However, there are further surprises. The narrative moves outwards from the immediate dark scene of Denmark to the even darker world of Troy and it does so with full allusiveness. Pyrrhus, after all, is a son revenging *his* father and, hence, he belongs to the same category as Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras. When he kills Priam, as later on the return to Greece he sacrifices Polyxena, Pyrrhus acts in the spirit of revenge. As such he provides yet another mirror for Hamlet's own dilemma and he widens the sphere of the revenge theme.

The Player King's narrative carries the audience away to a larger scene, an elsewhere, remote and distant, but not an irrelevant one. The Trojan elsewhere (as so often occurs in Renaissance literature) is made pertinent, structurally analogous, almost immediate. Furthermore, there is an inward turn towards characterization, typical of all Shakespeare's embedded narratives, that focusses upon Hecuba's experience of Priam's murder. (In *The Rape of Lucrece* when Lucrece turns to the "piece/ Of Skillful painting," itself a formal ekphrasis of the same events narrated in the Player King's narrative, she also makes Hecuba the central focus, the experiencing observer of the events). Not only does the narrative focus upon Hecuba's perception of the scene (that is, the murder of her husband) but it also creates a series of analogous focusses. The gods are invoked to share Hecuba's experience and the Player King feels this experience as if he, too, were a witness to the scene and not merely its accidental narrator. Hamlet also feels the depth and the

[11]Copyright laws allow one to own, for a limited duration, certain narratives but not the story. It is doubtful that copyright laws really accord with the (more or less piratical) nature of story-telling.

[12]Jenkins' discussion of the embedded narrative shared between Hamlet and the Player King makes plain how purposeful, allusive and complex it actually is (pp. 478-80).

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quality of Hecuba's passion, but he feels it through the analogous passion in the Player King, and he uses it to contrast his own seeming lack of response to a death that is an actuality and not only a fiction. Yet in all cases it is the idea of grief, the conceit, that causes a man's "whole function" to form itself, a shaping of outsides to insides (the "actions that a man might play" so clearly upon the surface of obscure intentions) that is, in a significant way, entirely congruent with *Hamlet's* thematic concerns. At this level the embedded narrative reveals still another aspect of reflexivity: not only may old stories be told and retold but their focus can be transferred from the perceived character to the voice of the narrator (which can be enunciated by any voice playing at being a narrator) and from there to the audience, the external narratees, the actual ears, that hear the narrative. Narratives thread ears, labyrinthinely, it seems, through many dimensions of reality.

The final recursive move in *Hamlet* occurs when Hamlet asks Horatio to tell his story ("report me and my cause aright") to the harsh world. Now Hamlet's story must include, as one narrative another, one text its precursive texts, Old Hamlet's story. Horatio does not tell it, though it seems plain that he intends to do so in the extra-textual future, but he does tell a summary version. The summary, while accurate, shifts the story to a very high level of abstraction. Thus *Hamlet* ends on a narrative note. It ends by insisting that narratives are important, that they can be told in many ways, that they can go on being told, that any voice may be borrowed for the task (though some will work better than others), and that the best narrator, the teller of stories who will be able to hold attention, command ears, will be someone who has both a talent and an education. Horatio meets the narrative demands. This seems to be one reason (the narrative reason, at least) the play opens with Horatio telling stories. His closeness to Hamlet, the confidences that Hamlet indicates he has given him but which are not stated in the play (except, of course, for the model narrative that Hamlet tells Horatio [5.3.4-55] and which is, indeed, unmistakably ear-commanding), all this must be seen as preparation for his final elevation. Like Hamlet raised upon the stage, Horatio is raised to a distinctive prominence: he will make the story heard, tell it again and again (like Brutus in *Lucrece)* and perhaps, as Hamlet senses in his soliloquy after the Player King's narrative, "cleave the general ear" with its powerful contents and his skillful telling. So obvious does it seem that *Hamlet* ends upon a narrative note, and specifically with Horatio preparing to narrate, that one must find it wonderful indeed that some critics, particularly J.V. Cunn-

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ingham, have supposed that Horatio is preparing to stage a play.[13] *Hamlet* concerns narrative, at least as much as it concerns dramatic playing, and Horatio is, or will become, the master narrator to keep children from their play and old men from their chimney corners.[14]

Narrative prevades *Hamlet* as it does all Shakespeare's plays. This is not surprising when one considers the kind of education that writers in the sixteenth century received: that education was essentially narrative (with drama always a supplement, extramural or recreational) and one *should* expect to find it everywhere. In Shakespeare narrative often seems to dominate the plays. A narrative somewhere else (focussed through a someone else, a character belonging not to the play but only to the narrative) emerges from within the play, as from an anachronic fissure, to master and subordinate, however briefly, the encompassing drama. The effect is profound: a realm of narrative-men asserts itself, through the realm of play-men by which it is created, and claims the foreground.

Shakespeare's narratives, in *Hamlet* especially but everywhere as well, display a deep conceptual grasp of narrative conventions. A willingness to play is, in itself, persuasive argument that the player has understood the game. This conceptual grasp of conventions (the very narrativity of all the narratives) does not exhaust itself in play, or in the self-conscious delight in narrative craftiness, but reaches outwards to the problems of reception, of audience, of attentiveness. Repeatedly, Shakespeare's narratives return to the figure of the narratee, the hearer with greedy ears, who is thus incorporated into the narrative. The Ghost's narrative makes the process entirely plain: Hamlet is instructed by the narrative, held by it, and brought into it. The connections between the story, the narrative, the narrator and the narratee (the possible variations are numerous) are all evident in Shakespeare's narrative. All are threaded into the text of *Hamlet* with exemplary cunning.

[13]See "Aught of Woe or Wonder," in *Tradition and Poetic Structure* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1960), pp. 142-63.

[14]See Alethea Hayter, *Horatio's Version* (London: Faber, 1972).

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Hamlet in the Eighteenth Century, 1701—1750 : From John Dennis to Arthur Murphy

PREM NATH

Shakespeare is perhaps the most widely read and commented upon writer. In his own time, however, he was a target of critical attacks by fellow authors like Ben Jonson and Robert Greene. Jonson said that Shakespeare had no classical learning and that he "wanted art."[1] Moreover, even when he was alive, Shakespeare was accused of borrowing freely from his predecessors—the University Wits. Greene, contrasting the learning of the University Wits of whom he himself was one, with Shakespeare's native wit, described him as "an upstart Crow, beautified with our Feathers," who "is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."[2] Shakespeare is not known to have replied to Greene's attacks on his lack of originality and his alleged excessive pretensions as a dramatist. Shakespeare's silence in the face of such grave provocation implies that he was either amused by, or was indifferent to, these scurrilous attacks on him and that he had an inner self-assurance of his own worth. But it must be admitted that Shakespeare would have lost much of his fame if the dramatic critics, especially of the eighteenth century, had not groomed his works and presented them in an orderly form for their readers and audiences.

The eighteenth century is significant in many ways for Shakespeare in general, and for *Hamlet* in particular. The texts of Shakespeare's plays as they are known to us today were given their present shape in the early part of the eighteenth century. Nicholas Rowe bestowed special attention on *Hamlet* by comparing all the earlier available texts of this play and then printing his own version in his edition (1709) of Shakespeare. Again, Lewis Theobald's *Shakespeare Restored* . . . (1726) mainly pertains to *Hamlet*. *Shakespeare Restored* was intended to

[1]Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden (1619) in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925, rpt. 1965), p. 133. Spellings modernized. Also see John Aubrey, *Brief Lives* . . . , ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), II, 227 (s.v. "Shakespeare").

[2]Greene, *Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592, 1596) in *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (1881-86, rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), XII, 144. Spellings modernized.

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correct primarily the errors in Pope's edition of Shakespeare (1725). Theobald however, confines himself mainly to pointing out correct readings in *Hamlet* by consulting all the editions of the play available to him. Theobald justifies his corrections by quoting parallel passages from Shakespeare's other works. He suggests over one hundred corrections, many of which have been accepted by modern editors of *Hamlet*.[3]

Though *Hamlet* does not conform to the general critical norms of the eighteenth century, it did not on that account decline in popularity during that period. This is owing to the complexity of reactions, both with regard to mechanics and content, that the play produced among critics. If, as we shall see in greater detail later, Shaftesbury and Rowe praised *Hamlet* for having one single action involving its eponym, some smaller and rigid critics of the neo-classical period like Gildon found that singleness broken because of Hamlet's conversation with the grave diggers. Uncompromising puritans like Defoe described the performing of *Hamlet* for raising funds for a church as a satanic deed, yet this very work gave George Lillo basis enough to explain the rationale of plays in general. Similarly eminent critics of the period like Addison, Dennis, Theobald and Hanmer found it a debatable subject whether the rule of poetic justice is observed or violated in *Hamlet*. What almost uniformly attracted the critics to this play is something that even otherwise was the most favourite motif in eighteenth-century literature, namely, didacticism, of which they found many instances in *Hamlet*. Steele, Warburton, Pope and others acclaimed the play for the moral reflections and useful bits of advice that it offers. The subtle hold that *Hamlet* kept over the eighteenth-century mind is evidenced in the allusions to this play in contexts ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous in literary works of the period. This play, because of its disparate elements compassing the grand soliloquies of Hamlet and his exhortation to Gertrude on the one hand and his ribaldry with Polonius and Opehlia on the other, seldom allowed commentators to remain indifferent to it. Occasionally when *Hamlet* did not please certain dogmatic and cold critics, it at least provoked them to write against it.

Hamlet was a favourite work not only of the professional critics, but of the general audience as well. It had also been the preferred play of Shakespeare himself, according to Rowe who tells us that Shakespeare's "name is printed, as the custom was in those times, amongst those of other players, before some old plays, but without any parti-

[3]Ronald B. McKerrow, *The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text by his Earlier Editors, 1709-1768*, Annual Shakespeare Lecture of the British Academy, 1933 (n.p., Norwood Editions, 1976), p. 24.

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cular account of what sort of parts he used to play; and though I have inquired, I could never meet any further account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*."[4] And William Guthrie believes that the drawing of Hamlet's character "cost Shakespeare more than any one figure he ever attempted."[5] The frequent performing of *Hamlet* in the early eighteenth century is a measure of its popularity with the common theatre-goer. Theobald writes that *Hamlet* is "perhaps, the best known, and one of the most favourite plays of our author: for these thirty years last past, I believe, not a season has elapsed, in which it has not been performed on the stage more than once."[6] And it was *Hamlet* that was staged in 1707 to celebrate an important event in the history of the English theatre, i.e., the Union of the King's Company and the Duke's Company, as also to mark the Union of Scotland with England. Colley Cibber in 1740 records this significant staging of *Hamlet* in these words: "the play of *Hamlet* being acted soon after, Estcourt, who then took upon himself to say anything, added a fourth line to Shakespeare's Prologue to the Play, in that play, which originally consisted but of three, but Estcourt made it run thus:

> 'For us, and for our tragedy,
> Thus stooping to your clemency,
> [This being a year of Unity,]
> We beg your hearing patiently'
>
> (3.2.140ff)

This new chronological line coming unexpectedly upon the audience, was received with applause, though several grave faces looked a little out of humour at it."[7]

Apart from the fact that this play was acted to mark important

[4] "Some Account of the Life . . . of . . . Shakespeare," being the Introduction to Rowe's edn. of Shakespeare, rpt. in *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. D. Nichol Smith (1903, 2nd edn., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 3. Spellings and other peculiarities of Rowe's text, as of all other eighteenth-century texts quoted in this article, are made to conform to modern usage. Later references to Rowe are made by page number only inserted in the text of the essay.

[5] *An Essay Upon English Tragedy* . . . (1747, rpt. London: Frank Cass, 1971), p. 21. Subsequent quotations from this work are identified by page number only in the article itself.

[6] *Shakespeare Restored* . . . (1726, rpt. London: Frank Cass, 1971), p. vii (Introduction). Subsequently referred to as *Shakespeare Restored*.

[7] *An Apology for the Life af Mr. Colley Cibber* . . . (London: printed for the author, 1740), p. 173.

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events in British political and theatrical history, *Hamlet* provided to literary critics many occasions for exercising their faculties to give incisive insights into some of the characters of this play, especially the Ghost, Polonius, and Hamlet, in this order of priority. It is a tribute to Shakespeare's imagination and dramatic skill that the Ghost especially appealed to the age of reason which did not seriously believe in the supernatural. The consensus opinion about the Ghost was that if such beings really existed, they would be like the one in *Hamlet*. Thus the spirit of Hamlet's father was considered a model Ghost. And on the side of extended general criticism, *Hamlet* has the unique distinction of being made the subject of a treatise known as *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* (1736).[8] Moreover, *Hamlet* remained the least altered by D'Avenant, one of the most decorum-conscious critics of the Restoration. D'Avenant's alterations, though reprehensible, are confined to the diction of the play. D'Avenant originally altered Shakespeare's language in *Hamlet* in 1676, but his version continued to appear up to 1703.[9] And Defoe, with a Jeremy Collier-like attitude towards the stage,[10] fulminated against a news item which had appeared in the *Daily Courant* of June 18, 1706, that in order to repair a chapel in Russell Court, *Hamlet* would be staged to raise funds. Defoe, in his essay in the *Review* of June 20, 1706, implores his readers to "go to the church and pay your money there; and never let the playhouse have such a claim to its establishment as to say the church is beholden to her."[11] Defoe reacted more ecclesiastically than the ecclesiasts themselves, but the decision of the latter to choose *Hamlet* for staging in order to collect money, reveals the acuteness of their judgment that *Hamlet* would draw large audiences, which it did. Such was the popularity of *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century. Indeed, this play is the only one, at least in the eighteenth century, which, as we shall see presently, was made the very basis for the justification of the art of drama. One wishes that

[8] *Anonymous* [attributed to Thomas Hanmer], *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* . . . 1736 (Rpt. The Augustan Reprint Society, 1947), Series Three, No. 3, with an Introduction by Clarence D. Thorpe. Citations from *Some Remarks* are identified by page number inserted in the text of this essay. On the question of authorship, see C.D. Thorpe, "Thomas Hanmer and the Anonymous Essay on *Hamlet*," *MLN*, 49 (1934), 493-98.

[9] Hazelton Spencer, *Shakespeare Improved: The Restoration Versions In Quarto and on the Stage* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1927, rpt. 1963), pp. 137, 174, 177.

[10] For Collier's criticism against the Stage, see *A Short View* . . . (1698, rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1974), *passim*, and esp. p. 10 on *Hamlet*.

[11] *The Best of Defoe's Review: An Anthology*, ed. William L. Payne (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp. 239-43.

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Collier and Defoe, instead of launching a wholesale onslaught on the English stage, had made a distinction between plays which are morally reprehensible and others like *Hamlet* which provide the raison d'être of drama.

George Lillo, in the Dedication to his *London Merchant* (1731), defending his own play and *Hamlet*, writes, "plays, founded on moral tales in private life, may be of admirable use, by carrying conviction to the mind, with such irresistible force, as to engage all the faculties and powers of the soul in the cause of virtue, by stifling vice in its first principles. They who imagine this to be too much to be attributed to tragedy, must be strangers to the energy of that noble species of poetry." Lillo goes on to elaborate on this point by quoting from *Hamlet* several lines of the Prince's soliloquy which concludes Act 2 scene 2 of the play. Some of the lines may be allowed here to illustrate Lillo's point :

> I've heard that guilty Creatures at a Play,
> Have, by the very cunning of the Scene,
> Been so struck to the Soul, that presently,
> They have proclaim'd their malefactions.

Lillo concludes his defence of such plays by highlighting their utility which he does by citing the last two lines of Hamlet's soliloquy: "The Play's the thing,/Wherein I'll catch the Conscience of the King." Glancing back probably at Collier and Defoe, Lillo clinches the issue by adding that plays like *Hamlet* "are the best answers to them who deny the lawfulness of the Stage."[12]

The introductory part of this essay may be concluded in imitation of a book which is the earliest on the debatable subject of Shakespeare's learning. This is Peter Whalley's *An Inquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare . . . In Conversation between Eugenius and Neander* (1748). After letting us hear the discussion between Eugenius and Neander, Whalley concludes his small book with these words: "Neander complied with the invitation [to eat lunch with Eugenius], on the condition that his friend [Eugenius] would accompany him to see the tragedy of *Hamlet*, which was acted in the evening, to which he readily agreed."[13]

[12] *The London Merchant*, in *Eight enth-Century Tragedy*, ed. Michael R. Booth (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 4, 5. I have not changed Lillo's quotations from *Hamlet* to conform to the Kittredge *Hamlet* which edition I otherwise use in this article.

[13] *An Inquiry . . .* (1748, rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 84. Subsequent citations from Whalley are from this work and are identified by page number inserted in the body of the article.

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I move on now to taking a look at various aspects of *Hamlet* in the light of the comments and remarks that were made on them by literary critics and writers of the first half of the eighteenth century.

I

The reaction of the critics towards *Hamlet*, as towards Shakespeare, is only partly predictable. Voltaire in his 1730 edition of *Oedipe* describes the dramatic unities as the "wise rules of the stage,"[14] and it is these rules that the critics reckon with in one way or the other. Farquhar in his *Discourse upon Comedy* (1702) argues for an English drama without classical rules. "To determine a suit of law," runs Farquhar's argument, "we don't look into the archives of Greece or Rome, but inspect the reports of our own lawyers, and the acts and statutes of our parliaments; and by the same rule we have nothing to do with the models of Menander of Plautus." Farquhar goes on to point out that *Hamlet* is one of those plays of Shakespeare which "have long been the darlings of the English audience, and are like to continue with the same applause, in defiance of all the criticisms that ever were published in Greek, and Latin."[15] Later, Rowe and Pope in the preliminary remarks to their editions of Shakespeare (1709, 1725) use Farquhar's analogy and even wording to shield the dramatist against the charge of ignoring the Unities.

In the history of *Hamlet* criticism in the eighteenth century, Rowe did some pioneering work. Contrasting *Hamlet*, as well as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, favourably with the history plays of Shakespeare, Rowe writes that in the plays of the latter category the dramatist's "design seems most commonly rather to describe those great men [i.e., historical personages] in the several fortunes and accidents of their lives, than to take any single great action, and form his work simply upon that." But in some other plays, e.g., *Hamlet*, Rowe goes on to add, "the fable is founded upon one action only" (p. 17). To my knowledge it has remained unrecorded so far that Shaftesbury's praise of *Hamlet*, which came soon after Rowe's account, that the play is "a series of deep reflections drawn from one mouth, upon the subject of one single accident and calamity,"[16] owes something to the first editor

[14]In *Dramatic Essays of the Neoclassic Age*, ed. Henry Hitch Adams and Baxter Hathaway (1947, rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 309.

[15]Farquhar, *Works*, ed. Charles Stonehill (Bloomsbury: The Nonesuch Press, 1930), II, 338.

[16]*Soliloquy: Or Advice to an Author* (1710), Part II, sec. iii in *Characteristics* . . . .

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of Shakespeare namely, Rowe. The unity of action in *Hamlet* that was perceived by Rowe and dwelt upon by Shaftesbury as one of the important qualities of this play was, however, blurred to those critics who were more rigid in the application of classical rules, but were less discerning in their view of life as it is actually lived. Thus Gildon, Hanmer, and Garrick, as recorded by Lyttelton later in one of his *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760), are among those who found the play spoiled by the presence of the grave diggers' scene.

Gildon considered *Hamlet* "as the masterpiece of Shakespeare" and expressed the opinion that "the discourse between Hamlet and the grave-maker is full of moral reflections, and worthy minding," but found it irrelevant in the context of the play. The scene is of no "use to the design [of *Hamlet*], and may be as well left out; and whatever can be left out has no business in a play, but this being low comedy has still less to do here."[17] Gildon failed to recognise the importance of Hamlet's mood at the time when the grave-diggers' scene occurs in the structure of the play. Hanmer could only excuse the grave-diggers' scene on the very ground that Gildon had completely failed to see. "The scene of the grave-diggers, I know is much applauded, but in my humble opinion," writes the author of *Some Remarks*, "is very unbecoming such a piece as this, and is only pardonable as it gives rise to Hamlet's moral reflections upon the infirmity of human nature" (p. 46). If the professional critics found elements of low comedy in *Hamlet*, the stage did not hesitate to attract more audiences by the addition of ribaldry. The critic and the audience do not always pull in the same direction. One can understand why for many years during the first half of the eighteenth century, comic epilogues were added to plays to attract audiences. The epilogues, says Mary E. Knapp, were very indecent and vulgar; "hence their popularity." Knapp points out that *Hamlet* did not escape from the employment of this device to lure more spectators. In 1710, Hester Santlow (Mrs. Barton Booth), who spoke comic epilogues in boy's clothing, had the last word in *Hamlet*.[18]

Thus we find that whereas some critics were in favour of excisions from the play to make it correspond to the regular pattern of classical drama, some play-house versions of *Hamlet* adopted means which made

ed. John M. Robertson (1900, rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), I, 180. Later referred to as *Characteristics*.

[17]Gildon, *Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare*, prefixed to his edn. of Shakespeare, Vol. VII (London: E. Curll and E. Sanger, 1710), pp. 397, 404. Subsequently referred to as *Remarks*.

[18]See Mary E. Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 103-04.

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it more popular with the audience. This consideration is confined to *Hamlet* primarily as a book rather than in its stage renderings. One important name with whom the acting of Hamlet is associated may be allowed here. This is Betterton (1635-1710), whose fine acting of the role of Hamlet is recorded by Rowe (p. 19). Indeed Betterton's contemporaries in general "unite in praise of his performance of Hamlet," and John Downes, in *Roscius Anglicanus, or an Historical Review of the Stage from 1660 to 1706* (1708), discloses the secret of Betterton's success. Betterton had indirectly benefited by Shakespeare's coaching on the acting of the part of Hamlet. Joseph Taylor of the Black Friars Company was "instructed by the author Mr. Shakespeare," and this was observed by D'Avenant who "taught Mr. Betterton in every particle of it; which by his exact performance of it gained him esteem and reputation superlative to all other plays."[19] This rather elaborate account of the acting of Hamlet's part by Betterton has been given primarily to emphasize the point that hardly anybody can precisely reconstruct a dramatist's views on the impersonation of the characters of his plays. In the case of *Hamlet*, as also the other plays of Shakespeare, it is no longer possible for an actor to benefit as Joseph Taylor was benefited by Shakespeare's coaching. Samuel Johnson's famous (or notorious) opinion that a play read affects the mind in the same way as a play acted (*Preface* 1765) seems to go only half way. This statement suggests that actors neither increase nor decrease the effectiveness of a play, especially tragedy. But this is not true. Indeed, just one sentence before the statement under reference, Johnson says that "familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre, than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less." Johnson realizes in the *Preface*, but not as adequately as he had done earlier in a different context, that most actors and actresses, for various reasons, are potential barriers between the playwright and his audience.[20] Charles Lamb, though he does not fall within our period, but to whose opinion I subscribe, should be briefly quoted to clinch the issue: "It is difficult for a frequent playgoer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from

[19]Quoted by D.N. Smith (see n. 4 above), p. 287.

[20]Yale edn. of Johnson's *Works*, VII, 79. In 1740, when he was thirty-one, Johnson said to David Garrick, "I'll come no more behind your scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities." Boswell's *Life*, ed. Hill-Powell, I, 201. Also see my Note, "Johnson and Augustus Caesar," in *AN&Q*, April 1980. For a convenient summing up of Johnson's adverse opinion about actors and acting generally and the possible background of this view, see Joseph Epes Brown, *The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson* (1926, rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), s.v. "Drama: Actors and Acting," and n. 1 on p. 73.

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the person and voice of Mr. K [i.e., John Philip Kemble, 1757-1823]."[21] Since with the death of Betterton (1710), whatever personal touch of Shakespeare's direction was left also perished, we would therefore be better advised to be content with the words in *Hamlet* as Shakespeare put them down..

II

One of the aspects of *Hamlet* that engages the attention of three prominent critics is the depiction of cruelty. Rowe finds *Hamlet* more classical in this regard than the *Electra* of Sophocles. Rowe was perhaps looking for some compensatory favourable point in *Hamlet* because it does not observe the dramatic unities. Rowe compares the son and mother scene in *Electra* unfavourably with the corresponding scene in *Hamlet*. "Orestes imbrues his hands in the blood of his own mother," writes Rowe and adds that this "barbarous action is performed, though not immediately upon the stage, yet so near, that the audience hear Clytemnestra crying out to Aegisthus for help, and to her son for mercy; while Electra, her daughter, and a princess, both of them characters that ought to have appeared with more decency, stands upon the stage and encourages her brother in the parricide. What horror does this not raise!" Though Nicholas Rowe has no doubt that Clytemnestra deserves to be killed, as she is by her son, yet he objects to such an action because it "is certainly an offence against those rules of manners proper to the persons that ought to be observed there." Hamlet has the same feeling of hatred against his mother as Orestes has for Clytemnestra, yet Shakespeare manages the depiction of cruelty in his play in a skilful and artistic manner. Shakespeare makes the ghost of Hamlet's father ask the Prince not to do "violence to his mother . . . 'Taint not thy mind; nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother aught' " (1.5.85-86) (p.18). Hanmer in *Some Remarks* (p. 30) praised Rowe for his discriminating account of *Electra* and *Hamlet*.

Two years after Rowe's *Account*, Addison in *Spectator* No. 44 also deals with the question of cruelty in *Hamlet*.[22] Though most of Addison's remarks are confined to Orestes, his disagreement with Rowe's unfavourable contrast of *Electra* with *Hamlet* is quite apparent. It is possi-

[21] *Charles Lamb on Shakespeare*, ed. Joan Coldwell (Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, U.K.: Colin Smythe, 1978), p. 27 ("On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," 1811).

[22] Quotations from the *Spectator* are from Donald F. Bond's edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965). Subsequent citations from the *Spectator* are identified only by the number of the issue, inserted in the text of this essay.

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ble that Addison was answering Rowe while writing in praise of the Greek play which Rowe had found shocking. Addison considers the "dreadful dialogue between [Orestes and Clytemnestra] behind the scene" much more affecting "than any thing transacted before the audience." Orestes also slays the usurper, Aegisthus, off stage and thus Sophocles "observes that decency, which Horace afterward established by a rule, of forbearing to commit parricides or unnatural murders before the audience."[23] Apart from this unfavourable contrast of *Hamlet* with *Electra*, Addison's other remarks on the former play, which will be duly considered, show his great admiration for the English play.

Charles Gildon, though not a very remarkable figure in eighteenth-century literary criticism, has the distinction of being the first critic of the century to have written fairly elaborate remarks on each of the plays of Shakespeare. Gildon, like Addison, disagrees with Rowe who had preferred *Hamlet* to Sophocles's *Electra* in the matter of depicting cruelty. Gildon concisely sums up his position in this regard by pointing out that whereas "Shakespeare was master of this story . . . Sophocles was not" (*Remarks*, p. 397), since the Greek dramatist based his play on mythology that was known and at least in a serious play was not alterable.

The question of poetic justice, an important aspect of *Hamlet* as of tragedy in general, drew the attention of some of the stalwarts of the eighteenth-century literary scene: Addison, Dennis, Theobald, Hanmer, Peter Whalley and, indirectly, Samuel Richardson. In *Spectator* No. 40, Addison considers the issue of poetic justice, the observance of which was generally regarded as necessary by most theoreticians of literature. Addison, whose attitude in this matter was close to life, described poetic justice as "a ridiculous doctrine in modern criticism." Apart from the usual argument that "good and evil happen alike to all men on this side of the grave," Addison advances an aesthetic reason for the breach of poetic justice in tragedy. "Terror and commiseration," points out Addison, "leave a pleasing anguish in the mind, and fix the audience in such a serious composure of thought, as is much more lasting and delightful than any little transient starts of joy and satisfaction." It may be pointed out that Addison lists *Othello* and *Lear*, but not *Hamlet* among Shakespeare's tragedies that do not follow poetic justice. Addison's final position is that a tragedy may be written with or without poetic justice. He does not specifically state whether this doctrine is, or is not, followed in *Hamlet*. Thirty-seven years afterwards, Richard-

[23] *Ars Poetica*, tr. T.A. Moxon in *Aristotle's Poetics and other Classical Writings*, ed. T.A. Moxon (Everyman's Lib. edn., 1949), p. 67.

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son, in the postscript to *Clarissa* (1748) defends Addison's position on poetic justice, though he explains that in his own novel this doctrine has been followed.

John Dennis, whose position on poetic justice, unlike Addison's is not flexible, adduces for the observance of poetic justice reasons that are theological rather than aesthetic. In a work of art, as in a historical narration, says Dennis, "those events are the most entertaining, the most surprizing, and the most wonderful, in which Providence most plainly appears . . . . The good must never fail to prosper, and the bad must be always punished." Dennis finds that most of Shakespeare's best tragedies are "wanting in the exact distribution of poetical justice." *Hamlet* also basically lacks poetic justice, according to Dennis, "though it may be said in defence of [this play], that Hamlet had a design to kill his uncle who then reigned; yet this is justified by no less than a call from heaven, and raising up one from the dead to urge him to it."[24] Dennis implies, though mildly, that Hamlet, who plans to kill the usurper and the defiler of the royal bed is in some way guilty of parricidal intentions. Dennis, the professed moralist, thus applies two different yardsticks to measure the sins of Hamlet and his uncle.

Lewis Theobald, in an essay in his periodical, *Censor*, No. 10 (2 May, 1715), like Dennis before him, finds the question of poetic justice in *Hamlet* a tricky issue. But Theobald sees the issue no more clearly than Dennis. "Virtue ought to be rewarded as well as vice punished," writes Theobald echoing Dennis, and regrets that the "moral is broke through" in *Hamlet* as in some other tragedies of Shakespeare. But Theobald promptly adds, what Dennis tacitly implies, that Shakespeare's breach of poetic justice in *Hamlet* has an extenuating factor, that is, "Hamlet having the blood of his uncle on his hands *blood will have blood*, as the poet himself expressed it in *Macbeth* [sic]"[25] (3.4.122).

The author of *Some Remarks* did not confine the question of poetic justice to Hamlet alone. Hanmer also considers the fate of other characters of the play in the light of this doctrine. Hanmer finds poetic justice observed in the case of characters other than Hamlet. "Laertes' death

[24]*The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed. E.N. Hooker (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Pr., 1939-1943), II, 6-7. (An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare, 1712). Later identification of citations from Dennis are inserted in the main text thus: Hooker, Vol. number followed by page number

[25]Theobald's *Censor* No. 10 is reprinted in *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage, Volume 2, 1693-1733*. ed. Brian Vickers (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 306. Subsequent references to this book, in six volumes, are given in the main body of the essay thus: *Shakespeare*, followed by the relevant volume number and page number.

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. . . [is] truly poetical justice, and very naturally brought about, although I do not conceive it to be so easy to change rapiers in a scuffle, without knowing it at the time." The death of Gertrude is artistically contrived and is most satisfying "for she loses her life by the villainy of the person who had been the cause of all her crimes." Hanmer forgets the theory of poetic justice when he describes the death of Hamlet. He waxes eloquent and rhetorically asks: "Who can see or read the death of the young prince without melting into tears and compassion?" (pp. 47-48). It might surprise some to know what Peter Whalley thought of the ending of *Hamlet*. He deals with the question of Hamlet's death in the context of Shakespeare's sources of his play. "The catastrophe" in *Hamlet*, believes Whalley, "is exceedingly ill managed, and very unequal to the rest of the play. It differs as much likewise from the truth of history, which informs us, that Hamlet survived the usurper, and died a natural death." Whalley might have been satisfied if *Hamlet* had been a crude revenge play, for he writes that "the departure from an ancient fact is easily pardoned, when it occasions a fine distress, or any extraordinary scene of action. Yet neither of these . . . is accomplished by the death of Hamlet" (p. vi). Curiously, Whalley has the words "fine distress" but, as his lack of response to the death of Hamlet shows, he fails to comprehend their import. Thus eighteenth-century critics, by and large, are insensitive to the trials and tribulations of Hamlet's soul. But Whalley, apart from the catastrophe of the play, otherwise found *Hamlet* worthy of praise. Indeed, as we noticed earlier, he concludes his book with a description of a staging of *Hamlet*.

A topic that is allied to poetic justice is that of general moral instruction in drama. Rather expectedly, the neo-classicists with their penchant for the 'utile' in literature, praised or criticised *Hamlet* depending upon whether they found or did not find what they expected to see in *Hamlet*. Shaftesbury thought *Hamlet* a model of good taste which was written not with the cheap intention of pleasing the audience, but to regulate their raw passions. Shaftesbury adulates *Hamlet* as a reflective play rather than a play of action. Shakespeare, writes the Earl in connection with *Hamlet*, "may witness for our good ear and manly relish. Notwithstanding his natural rudeness . . . that piece of his [*Hamlet*] which appears to have most affected English hearts, and has perhaps been oftenest acted . . . is almost one continued moral: a series of deep reflections drawn from one mouth, upon the subject of one single accident and calamity, naturally fitted to move horror and compassion."[26] Peter Whalley, who in his *Inquiry* upholds Shaftesbury's opinion of this play,

[26] *Characteristics* (see n. 16 above), pp. 179-80. Also see pp. 172-73.

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makes Neander say that like Euripides, Shakespeare on the basis of *Hamlet* may be described as a "dramatic philosopher" (p. 70).

Eustace Budgell in *Spectator* No. 77 points out the instructive seriousness of *Hamlet* as contrasted with the plebian entertainment provided by "a puppet-show or an opera." Bickerstaff's [Richard Steele's] friend Greenhat found *Hamlet* à play in which theatrical entertainment provided suitable occasion for inculcating moral lessons among people, especially for the young. Hamlet's famous soliloquy " 'To be, or not to be;' the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet, the noble ardour, after seeing his father's ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia; are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives." Greenhat further informs Bickerstaff that he took his young "cousin Jerry . . . with me [to see *Hamlet*], and shall always love the child for his partiality in all that concerned the fortune of Hamlet. This is entering youth into the affections and passions of manhood beforehand, and as it were antedating the effects we hope from a long and liberal education."[27] There are indeed other commentators of the period who also point out the ethical aspects of *Hamlet*, but none of them writes in as *ardentia verba* as Steele does. Perhaps it is for this reason that Thackeray described Steele as one who in the eighteenth century made Shakespeare popular and "brought him back into the mode" (*Henry Esmond*, Bk. II, ch. X). Hanmer believes that Hamlet "performs all the strictest rules of filial piety throughout the whole play, both to [his] father and mother" (p. 43). Similarly, an anonymous writer in the *Universal Journal* of 4 July, 1724 rhetorically asks: "Who can see the filial piety of Hamlet without partaking of his sorrows, and with equal ardour in his heart, pursuing the good king's murderer?" Another piece of anonymous writing in the *London Magazine* for June 1750 also praises Hamlet as a noble son who fulfils his filial duty towards his parents (*Shakespeare*, II, 11, and III, 381).

The time of the year of the writing of *Tatler* No. 111 (23 Dec. 1709) was the occasion for reminding Steele of something higher than filial piety. Steele, on this occasion recalls those lines in *Hamlet* "wherein, according to his agreeable wildness of imagination, [Shakespeare] has wrought a country tradition into a beautiful piece of poetry. In . . . *Hamlet*, where the ghost vanishes upon the cock's crowing [Shakespeare]

[27]*The Tatler* is quoted from *Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq* (London: Charles Lillie, 1710). This quotation is from *Tatler* No. 71. Subsequent citations to the *Tatler* are identified in the body of the essay.

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takes occasion to mention its crowing all hours of the night about Christmas time, and to insinuate a kind of religious veneration for the season." Steele goes on to quote "It faded on the crowing of the cock . . . . So hallow'd and so gracious is that time" (1.1.157-64). From this and from some other passages in Shakespeare, Steele in *Tatler* No. 111 concludes "that the age [Shakespeare] lived in had a much greater sense of virtue than the present." Warburton, later in his edition of the playwright (1747), expressed his admiration for these eight lines by marking them with double quotation marks.[28]

A more mundane and practical morality in this play was also noticed, among others, by Gildon, Hanmer and Whalley. Gildon says that "the advice of Laertes to his sister is very moral and just and full of prudential caution. And that of Polonius to his son, and that of the same to his daughter: 'Ay springes to catch wood-cocks . . .' [1.3.115ff]." Gildon goes on to add that "if the young ladies . . . study these [bits of advice] they would guard their virtues and honours better than many of them do" (*Remarks*, p. 398). The sexual morality in *Hamlet* was also commended by Hanmer in glowing terms: "The advice of Laertes to his sister contains the soundest reasoning, expressed in the most nervous and poetical manner, and is full of beauties; particularly, I can never enough admire the modesty inculcated in these lines: 'The chariest maid is prodigal enough,/ If she unmask her beauty to the moon' " (1.3.36ff) (pp. 24-25). Hanmer also finds "Ophelia's modest replies . . . and the virtuous caution she gives her brother, after his advice to her . . . inimitably charming" (p. 25). It may be pointed out that in an age noted for its licentiousness, it is not surprising that such approval should be forthcoming, for, it is a truth pretty well established that often the greatest offenders are the most pious moralists. What is surprising, however, is the failure of readers to detect the irony that Shakespeare probably intended; that while Laertes is warning his sister not to be free with Hamlet, he himself is determined to sow his wild oats in France; that, like his father, Laertes is full of sententious bits of advice that do not add up to anything particularly significant.

If Gildon and Hanmer praised sexual morality in *Hamlet*, Lewis Theobald found matters censurable on that very account. Referring to the well-known conversation between Ophelia and Hamlet in the play-scene (3.2.107-11), "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" Theobald says that "if ever the poet deserved whipping for low and indecent ribaldry, it

[28]Warburton, ed., *The Works of Shakespeare* (1747; rpt. New York: A M S Press, 1968), VIII, 122. Further citations to Warburton are by Vol. and page number only and are identified in the text of the essay.

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was for this passage; ill-timed in all its circumstances, and unbefitting the dignity of his characters, as well as of his audience" *(Shakespeare Restored*, p. 87). An unsigned poem in the *London Magazine* for June 1750, describes Shakespeare's various characters, and it includes animadversions on Gertrude which are generalized to include her whole sex: "Hamlet's mother shows her sex how frail!" *(Shakespeare*, III, 381*)*. Thus many eighteenth-century critics of *Hamlet*, like Addison and Pope in their own works, concern themselves with the sexual morality of men, and especially women.

Hanmer is among the very few critics of the eighteenth century who finds Hamlet's desire to send Claudius's soul to hell most reprehensible. Such bits of criticism give us some insight not only into *Hamlet* but into the personality of the commentator as well. "Hamlet's speech upon seeing the King at prayers, has always given me great offence. There is something so very bloody in it, so inhuman, so unworthy of a hero, that I wish our poet had omitted it." Hanmer concludes that this desire "in a Christian prince, is such a piece of revenge, as no tenderness for any parent can justify" (p 41). (Johnson later also objected to Hamlet's desire on grounds similar to Hanmer's.) Hanmer's desire that Hamlet should not have wished to send his uncle's soul to hell shows that the critic is oblivious of the intensity of Hamlet's abhorrence for his uncle who has committed murder and adultery.

III

On one aspect of *Hamlet*, i.e. the supernatural, critics of the first half of the eighteenth century, whatever may have been the shade of their religious beliefs, are unanimous in their praise. It is remarkable that the age of reason and common sense should have found the Ghost of Hamlet's father one of the most satisfying characters of the play. It is all the more creditable considering the fact that the Ghost is Shakespeare's own addition to the play as was pointed out by William Guthrie and Peter Whalley. There is no ghost in Saxo's story. According to Guthrie, "the story of the ghost was either Shakespeare's invention, or . . he had it from the songs of Danish bards which was all the history that people had before Saxo and Snorro wrote" (p. 21n.). Peter Whalley, with all his enthusiasm to find classical parallels to Shakespeare, could write about the supernatural in *Hamlet* that "the addition of the Ghost is probably from [Shakespeare's] own imagination" (p.vi). Warburton has the unique distinction of arguing plausibly that the Ghost was a later addition to the play, like the supernatural machinery in the

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Rape of the Lock. Warburton bases his argument on 2.3.82-84 which tells us about Hamlet's dead father: "how his audit stands, who knows save heaven? / But in our circumstance and course of thought, / 'Tis heavy with him." Warburton points out that from these lines "it appears that Shakespeare had drawn the first sketch of this play without [the] Ghost; and, when he had added that machinery, he forgot to strike out these lines: for the Ghost had told him, very circumstantially, how his audit stood: and he was now satisfied with the reality of the vision" (VIII, 205).

More important than the view that Shakespeare invented the Ghost and that its addition was an afterthought, is the opinion that the Ghost's appearance serves a definite purpose exquisitely, and that it lends an element of sublimity to the play. Addison, Steele and Gildon write that the Ghost in *Hamlet* is not the usual terrifying stock figure of tragedy, but is essential to the plan of the play. In *Spectator* No. 44, Addison expresses the opinion that "the appearance of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is a masterpiece in its kind . . . . The mind of the reader is wonderfully prepared for his reception by the discourses that precede it." Steele in *Tatler* No. 111 expresses his admiration for the Ghost in *Hamlet*. And Gildon writes that "all the scene betwixt Hamlet and the Ghost is admirable, as the Ghost's description of his residence in the other world" (*Remarks*, p.398).

The element of sublimity in the Ghost was noticed at least by four critics of the period, namely Leonard Welsted, Hanmer, William Smith and William Guthrie. Welsted (*A Treatise on the Sublime*, 1712) found Shakespeare abounding in the sublime, and, among the best instances, lists the first speech of Hamlet to the Ghost (*Shakespeare*, II, 298). Later Hanmer characterized the same scene as "the sublimest scene" in *Hamlet* (p.27). Hanmer concludes that "Hamlet's speech to his father's shade is as much superior to that of Horatio upon the same occasion, as his is to anything of that kind that I have ever met with in any other dramatic poet" (p.28). (William Duff in his *Critical Observations* (1770) will offer similar remarks on this subject.) William Smith, in his English edition (1739) of Longinus's *On the Sublime*, also noticed that the Ghost "in *Hamlet* is introduced with the utmost solemnity" and that it remains "awful . . . and majestic" throughout (*Shakespeare*, III, 100).

However, it was left for William Guthrie to explain why the Ghost is impressive and majestic. Guthrie, comparing the creative processes of Michael Angelo and Shakespeare, writes: "Like Michael Angelo, who, when carving any great design, wrought with an enthusiasm, and made the fragments of the marble fly round him, he is no longer himself; he

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flies from representation to reality; with Shakespeare, he treads the sacred ground; he surveys the awful dome; he does not describe, but converse, with the stalking ghost . . . the hallowed vaults re-echo his steps, and the solemn arches repeat his sounds" (pp.18-19).[29]

Eighteenth-century observations on the Ghost of Hamlet's father may be fittingly concluded with Addison's remark on the same subject. The eighteenth century is often dubbed rationalistic to a fault, but the remarks of various critics of the period on the Ghost in *Hamlet* are a compelling tribute to Shakespeare's power of gaining belief in the supernatural which at best could be viewed amusingly as in the *Rape of the Lock*. Steele in *Spectator* No.36 inveighs against the cheap and crude supernaturalism which was introduced on the stage of his period merely to stir and amuse the audience. But Shakespeare's depiction of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is different. Addison may be said to sum up the eighteenth-century position. "There is something so wild and yet so solemn in the speeches of [Shakespeare's] Ghosts," writes Addison in *Spectator* No. 419, and adds "that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge them, and must confess, if there are such beings in the world, it looks highly probable they should talk and act as he has represented them." Fielding's Partridge is not impressed by the Ghost when it makes its first appearance, but when it appears to Hamlet (played by Garrick) and talks to him, Partridge "sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet succeeding likewise in him" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XVI, ch.v.) Such was the uniformity of opinion among the real and fictional commentators on the nature and function of the Ghost in *Hamlet*.

IV

This uniformity of opinion is not seen on the question of Shakespeare's learning, as displayed in *Hamlet*. Dennis firmly denies that Shakespeare had any knowledge of the classics, and adds that the reference to Hecuba in *Hamlet* (2.2.489ff) is taken from some contemporary play (*Hooker*, II, 14). On the other hand Theobald was equally convinced that Shakespeare was a learned scholar and that he took the plot of *Hamlet* "from Saxo Grammaticus in his *Danish History*."[30] Of the

[29]Guthrie in a footnote on p. 19 explains that in these lines he is "alluding to the known tradition that Shakespeare shut himself up all night in Westminster Abbey when he wrote the scene of the ghost in *Hamlet*."

[30]Theobald, ed. *Works of Shakespeare* (1733, rpt. New York: A M S Press, 1968),

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seventy-eight notes that Theobald writes on *Hamlet*, quite a few are intended to show Shakespeare's classical "learning and knowledge" (VII, 312). Theobald was the first to point out that the conversation between Osric and Hamlet (5.2.94ff) is based on a part of the Third Satire of Juvenal (VII, 357). Hanmer agrees with Theobald that Shakespeare followed Saxo's *Danish History*, and generally improved upon it (pp. 5-7). In the second part of this essay, we will see Charlotte Lennox contradicting the view that Shakespeare improved upon Saxo. In this period we have Peter Whalley writing like a man wholly persuaded of his view, like Theobald and Hanmer before him, that Shakespeare read Saxo in Latin (p. v). But Whalley goes further than his predecessors; he is of the opinion that Shakespeare was quite familiar with Greek authors as well. Indeed Hamlet's famous soliloquy ("To be, or not to be") is shown to be derived considerably from Plato and Euripides (pp. 68-69).

Whether Shakespeare was learned or not, one thing stands out clearly in eighteenth-century literature, that many learned writers quote *Hamlet* in various contexts. I have already referred to the rather elaborate discussion of *Hamlet* between Partridge and Tom Jones. But *Hamlet* was more frequently made use of by way of brief quotations and references in order to point a moral or adorn a tale. Allusions to *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century occur both in serious and ludicrous contexts. These allusions constitute a recurrent proof that *Hamlet* was popular in the eighteenth century, since allusions and quotations are usually made without the book being in front of the writer. The words quoted are already in the mind of the writer who makes use of them, and he assumes that the reader will instantly grasp their significance. Some of the more important contexts where *Hamlet* is referred to may be listed. Swift in *Tatler* No. 68 (Sept. 14, 1709) writes that the "enemies of order, discipline and virtue . . . [get exposed] with impartiality and without respect to persons. 'So let the stricken deer go weep.' "[31] Swift here recalls from memory *Hamlet*, 3.2.259. Swift does not appear to have been particularly fond of Shakespeare or *Hamlet*. Walter Scott in his edition of Swift's *Works* (1814) first pointed out that Swift's library did not have a single copy of Shakespeare's works. Scott also said that Swift did not even once allude to Shakespeare. Harold Williams and other modern Swift scholars have been able to do only a little better than Scott. They believe that from certain documents pertaining to Swift, it can be in-

VII, 226. Subsequent references to this work are by Vol. and page number in the text of the article.

[31]Swift, *Bickerstaff Papers and Pamphlets on the Church*, being Vol. II of Swift's *Prose Works* ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940), p. 242.

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ferred that the Dean had a copy of Shakespeare's works. They have been able to detect a handful of Shakespeare quotations, mostly from the history plays, in the works of Swift.[32] In any case this seems to be the only reference that Swift makes to *Hamlet* in his writings. Addison in *Spectator* No. 191 describes a foolish, fashionable man called Gossling who, in expectation of winning a lottery, sets himself up as a gentleman. Addison writes that Gossling's "liveries are very rich, but not gaudy." Addison here recalls part of Polonius's advice to his son before the latter's setting out for France (1.3.71). Addison's cousin Eustace Budgell also makes comic use of Hamlet's serious thought (2.2.304-05). In *Spectator* No.217 Budgell makes his correspondent, Susanna Frost, "an old maid," say "man delights not me, / Nor woman neither." Pope in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1725) complains of corruptions of the Shakespeare canon owing to the actors.[33] Pope refers to Shakespeare's remonstrance in this regard in *Hamlet* (3.2.36-37) when the Prince of Denmark speaks to the Players: "let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them." *Hamlet* thus, in a way, becomes prophetic of what was to happen to Shakespeare's plays.

Again, Francis Hutcheson, in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), illustrates his point of view by quoting a part of Hamlet's soliloquy (2.2.543). Hutcheson rhetorically asks: "If there is no moral sense which makes benevolent actions appear beautiful, if all approbation be from the interest of the approver, 'What's Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba?' "[34] Lewis Theobald in the Introduction (p. ii) to his *Shakespeare Restored* (1726) says that "Shakespeare's *Works* have always appeared to me like what he makes his Hamlet compare the world to, 'an unweeded garden grown to seed' [1.2.135-36]." Again in the same book Theobald, comparing his work on Shakespeare with Pope's to the disadvantage of the latter, makes use of Hamlet's words and writes, "if I have the ill fortune to deceive my self in the attempt, I shall willingly submit to own my self, (as Hamlet says to Laertes), [5.2.241], 'his foil in my ignorance' " (p.134).

Dennis makes fun of Pope's habit of using "the initial letters of authors' Christian and surnames . . . [so] that one and the same author is compared to very different creatures, whose natures . . . are . . . contradictory . . . as the cloud in *Hamlet* is sometimes like a weazel, and some-

[32]See Harold Williams, *Dean Swift's Library* . . . (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 74-75 and n 3.

[33]Pope's edition of Shakespeare (1725, rpt. New York: A M S Press, 1969), I, XVI. Later referred to in the text of the article by volume and page number only.

[34]In *Dramatic Essays of the Neoclassic Age* (see n. 14 above), p. 265.

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times like a whale [3 2.359 ff]" (*Hooker*, II, 416).[35] Fielding, it appears, was especially fascinated by *Hamlet*. Apart from the elaborate discussion of the play in *Tom Jones*, Fielding makes use of *Hamlet* several times in his writings. A couple of instances may be given here. In his essay "Of the Remedy of Affliction for the Loss of our Friends" (1743), Fielding recommends philosophical acceptance of the loss "since from that bourne no traveller returns [3.1.79-80], surely it is the part of a wise man, to bring himself to be content in a situation which no wit or wisdom . . . can alter."[36] Again, in his "Essay on the knowledge of the Characters of Men" (1743) Fielding contrasts good humour which one has in one's good fortune, with good nature which rejoices in the good fortune of others, and draws the conclusion that "nothing is truer than the observation of Shakespeare; 'a man may smile, and smile, and be a villain' [1.5.108]. But how alien must this countenance be to that heavenly frame of soul, of which Jesus Christ himself was the most perfect pattern; of which blessed person it is recorded, that he never was once seen to laugh, during his whole abode on earth."[37] Such is the multifariousness of contexts in which *Hamlet* was quoted during this period. All this goes to show that *Hamlet* was one of the most often read and digested literary works in eighteenth-century England.

V

As compared to the extensive use of quotations from *Hamlet* in eighteenth-century literature, there seems to be little directly on Hamlet. the Prince of Denmark. There is nothing equivalent to Morgann's essay on Falstaff (1777), or even to William Popple's essay on Polonius in the *Prompter* (No.57, May 27, 1735). The subtle and over-subtle psychological niceties had yet not touched character interpretation and the views expressed were broad and commonsensical. It is interesting to find few critics of the period feeling bothered whether Hamlet delays or does not delay the execution of revenge. Hanmer and William Guthrie are the only ones who dwell marginally on the question of delay. Hanmer says that postponement of the action is necessary to keep the plot going, but

[35]This use of *Hamlet* occurs in a letter to the *Daily Journal*, May 11, 1728. On the question of authorship of this letter, see Hooker's note, II, 526, which, in part reads, "the letter was composed either by Dennis or by someone who knew his work and imitated his manner."

[36]*Miscellanies by Henry Fielding*, Vol. I, ed. Henry Knight Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 222.

[37]*Ibid*., p. 159. Fielding quotes *Hamlet* from memory.

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he cannot find any "good reason" for the postponement of the action itself (p.34). But Hanmer also argues that *Hamlet* "is one of Shakespeare's plays, in which the least time is employed; how much there is, I cannot pretend to say" (p. 18). Guthrie later discovered the reason for delay on Hamlet's part. According to him, "Hamlet is a well-meaning, sensible, young man, but full of doubts and perplexities even after his resolution is fixed. In this character there is nothing but what is common with the rest of mankind" (p.21). What Guthrie means is that Hamlet, like most of us, recoils from the thought of murder.

A few side-lights into the character of Hamlet may be given here. Thomas Purney, in the preface to his *Pastorals* (1717), considers Hamlet among one of the "uncommon characters" of Shakespeare who are "difficult ones to draw, the only ones that shine on the stage, and the only ones that I could never find in the French writers of tragedy" (*Shakespeare*, II, 318). Theobald saw Hamlet as a versatile character who appropriately adjusts his conduct to the foppery of Osric. "The humour and address of Hamlet" is seen in his accosting Osric "at once in [the latter's] own vein and style," writes Theobald (*Works*, VII, 357). David Garrick lamented that *Hamlet* did not get its due on the stage. He regretted that even a play like *Hamlet* had to be supplemented with harlequins to hold the attention of some part of the audience. In the Prologue spoken by him at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre (Sept. 8, 1750) Garrick said:

> Sacred to Shakespeare was this spot design'd,
> To pierce the heart, and humanize the mind.
> But if an empty House, the actor's curse,
> Shews us our Lears and Hamlets lose their force;
> Unwilling we must change the nobler scene,
> And in our turn present you Harlequin.
>
> (*Shakespeare*, III, 365-66)

It must be added that Garrick is making here a conventional complaint, and not speaking on oath. *Hamlet* did enjoy a certain popularity both on and off stage in the first half of the eighteenth century, at least with the fit part of the audience—a fraction of which there is never enough in any age.

One last opinion on Hamlet may be given before the discussion on Hamlet's character is concluded. Aaron Hill in his essay in the *Prompter* (No.100, Oct. 24, 1735) dwells on the inadequacy of the actors in doing justice to Shakespeare's conception of Hamlet. "To what excess," asks

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Aaron Hill, "would it not move were Hamlet's character as strongly represented as written!" Hill further adds that "the poet has adorned him with a succession of the most opposite beauties, which are varied, like colours on the cameleon, according to the different lights in which we behold him. But the player, unequal to his precedent, is for ever his unvaried self" (*Shakespeare*, III, 35). I would freely subscribe to this view which shows how extraneous factors like the looks of the actor, his pronunciation and tone, and his other peculiarities are a barrier rather than a help towards the full appreciation of Shakespeare's characters, especially Hamlet who is a complex figure beyond the reach of actors.[38]

There is equally little by way of comment during this period on Hamlet's pretended madness. Hanmer believes that Hamlet's pretended madness gives him free scope to indulge in lewd remarks during his conversations with Polonius and especially Ophelia; otherwise it serves no useful purpose, and, in fact, is a danger to the very life of Hamlet (pp. 33, 39). However, in spite of the paucity of comment on Hamlet the Dane, it was the common consensus that he was the eponym of the play. There was a singular opinion, very different from the preceding one, which continues to be unique till today. Fielding's Partridge thought that since Hamlet did what most people would do in his position, he is not a memorable character. The memorable character in *Hamlet* is King Claudius who is a real actor. Partridge's opinion has the only merit of being different from the consensus opinion. Perhaps Fielding wanted to emphasize Partridge's eccentricity by making him voice this opinion (*Tom Jones*, Bk.XVI, ch.V).

One of tne important figures in *Hamlet* about whom many critics talk in varied voices is Polonius. Perhaps because of the active role he plays as counsellor and courtier, he compelled the attention of neo-classic critics, just as Hamlet became the object of greater attention later with the Romantics. Critics of the period are about evenly divided on whether Polonius is commendable or censurable. There was another, and more important view, that Polonius was intended to be a good and wise courtier, but the actors were not equal to the role and thus on the stage Polonius appears to be usually foolish. William Popple in his *Prompter* essay of 25 May, 1735 (No. 57) writes with a view to dislodging an already entrenched tradition that showed Polonius foolish on the stage.[39] Popple's essay has the merit of highlighting the gap between

[38]On the inadequacy of most actors, see Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* . . . (1710, rpt. London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 15, and *passim*.

[39]Among some other eighteenth-century materials on *Hamlet*, Popple's essay is not discussed in Paul S. Conklin's *A History of 'Hamlet' Criticism: 1601-1821* (1947, rpt. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957).

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the dramatist's point of view on the one hand, and that of the directors and actors of the play on the other. Popple, though himself an obscure dramatist, has some perceptive things to say in his essay. "Actors and managers have not always penetration enough to dive into the truth of character and are therefore content to receive it from tradition and misact it." Popple, in the penultimate paragraph of his essay, says that he is writing in an attempt towards "the recovery of Polonius's true character." Thus Popple tries to visualize how Shakespeare conceived the character of Polonius. "Polonius, according to Shakespeare, is a man of a most excellent understanding and great knowledge of the world, whose ridicule arises not from any radical folly in the old gentleman's composition but a certain affectation of formality and method, mixed with a smattering of the wit of that age (which consisted in playing upon words), which being grown up with him is incorporated . . . with all his words and actions" (*Shakespeare*, III, 22, 28, 23).

Arthur Murphy, chronologically the last critic on our list, believes that the character of Polonius is among the many that are systematically degraded by the actors. In an essay in the *Student* (20 Oct., 1750), of which the main topic is *Romeo and Juliet*, Murphy points out that "many of Shakespeare's characters have suffered from the ignorance of the players . . . Polonius is still a silly doating old idiot. Indeed it is a shame to common sense to suffer that sensible, though officious, old courtier to be so miserably burlesqued: sensible I call him on account of the whole tenor of his speeches, but particularly that in which he advises his son on his setting out to travel, and which is judiciously omitted in the acting (for such elegant sentiments would sound very awkwardly from the mouth of a Macklin or a Taswell)" (*Shakespeare*, III, 375). Pope, with his didactic leanings, praised Polonius's advice to Laertes by distinguishing the lines with quotation marks (VI, 362).

Another opinion on Polonius is not a moderate one, but almost equally extreme. John Upton analyses the metre in which Shakespeare makes Polonius speak and concludes that the irregular trochaic tetrameter "with its dancing measure, is very proper to the character of Polonius, a droll humorous old courtier."[40] Warburton also expressed a similar opinion. "Polonius's character," says Warburton, "is that of a weak, pedant, minister of state. His declamation is a fine satire on the impertinent oratory then in vogue." Warburton pointed out further that Polonius has learnt by heart the precepts without really having made them a part of his mental make-up. Thus his essential shallowness is not

[40]John Upton, *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* (1746; 2nd edn., London: G. Hawkins, 1748), p. 382.

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hidden by reeling out wise sayings; because "Polonius was too weak to be the author of them, though he was pedant enough to have met with them in his reading, and fop enough to get them by heart and retail them for his own" (VIII, 160-61). Peter Whalley taking the historical perspective writes that Polonius's foolish rhetoric is what the old courtier got from his surroundings. The truth about Polonius, I think, is somewhere between the two extremes adopted by Popple *et al* on the one side and Upton and others on the other side. This is perceived by Whalley. He, while talking of the general maturity of *Hamlet*, points out that "even Polonius appears furnished with such observations, which long experience naturally produces." Whalley makes Eugenius illustrate his opinion by pointing out Polonius's awareness "of the partiality of mothers to their children in the commission of any crime" (p.70).

VI

In contrast to the divided opinion on the character of Polonius and his stereotype rhetoric, the soliloquies of Hamlet have been praised by nearly all critics of the first half of the eighteenth century. The only dissenting voice seems to be Charles Gildon's, as I will point out later. Richard Steele was the first to notice that Hamlet in his first soliloquy (1.2.129-59) reveals his brooding nature by successively reducing the time interval between the murder of his father and his mother's marriage to his uncle. "The shortness of the time between his father's death and his mother's second marriage," writes Steele in *Tatler* No.106, "brought together with so much disorder, [makes] up as noble a part as any in . . . *[Hamlet]*. The circumstance of time I never could enough admire. The widowhood had lasted two months. This is his first reflection: but as his indignation rises, he sinks to scarce two months: afterwards into a month; and at last, into a little month. But all this so naturally, that the reader accompanies him in the violence of his passion, and finds the time lessen insensibly, according to the difierent workings of his disdain."[41] In *Spectator* No. 541 (by John Hughes) the relationship of "pronunciation and action" with feelings is discussed and Hughes distinguishes the expression of various emotions like pleasure, sorrow and fear. Hughes concludes that "perplexity is different from all these, grave, but not bemoaning, with an earnest uniform sound of voice; as in that celebrated speech of Hamlet, 'To be, or not to be . . .' " (3.1.56ff). Hughes thus singles out this soliloquy as a model expression of perplexity which is

[41]Steele could have gone on to point out that in the play scene Hamlet contracts the time gap to "my father died within's two hours" (3.2.121).

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the prime feeling in Hamlet's mind at this time. Thomas Purney, speaking about Shakespeare's soliloquies in a more generalized manner than Hughes, says nearly the same thing. In the Preface to his *Pastorals* (1717) Purney writes that "all the tragedies of Shakespeare which we call good," and Purney counts *Hamlet* as one among them, "abound with the gloomy . . . [and] the chief use of the gloomy (in the sentiment) is in soliloquies." Purney goes on to contrast unfavourably the soliloquies in French tragedies with those in Shakespeare's and concludes, "what a solemn awe do Shakespeare's draw over the mind" (*Shakeapeare*, II, 318). Hanmer has a good word for soliloquies in *Hamlet* in general: "Hamlet's soliloquy, after the ghost has disappeared, is such as it should be . . . but his light and even ludicrous expression [to his friends]; his making them swear by his sword, and shift their ground, with the Ghost's crying under the stage, and Hamlet's reflection thereupon [1.5.143ff], are all circumstances certainly inferior to the preceding part" (pp.30-31). Some recent commentators on *Hamlet* have, however, found the lines under reference quite appropriate to the context: Hamlet feels that the Ghost may be the Devil playing antics on him. On the other hand, it is equally likely that Hamlet is deliberately treating the whole thing lightly because he is afraid that Marcellus and Bernardo may talk about it publicly.[42]

William Guthrie compares "the two famous soliloquies" in *Cato* and *Hamlet* and finds that in Addison's play human feeling is wanting, whereas Hamlet's soliloquy employs "the real language of mankind . . . from the philosopher to the peasant. It is a language which a man may speak without learning; yet no learning can improve, nor philosophy mend it" (pp. 25-26). Gildon's misunderstanding of the nature and function of the soliloquies in *Hamlet* becomes apparent from his own remarks which may be briefly summed up. Gildon, following Roscommon, believes that soliloquies should be few and short. This he adopts as a blanket rule without going into the nature and type of tragic plays. Thus Gildon, in *The Laws of Poetry Explained and Illustrated* (1721), has this to say about the famous "To be, or not to be" soliloquy. This soliloquy, writes Gildon, "which has been so much cried up in *Hamlet* has no more to do there than a description of the grove and altar of Diana, mentioned by Horace." Gildon concludes that he "can say in general that there is not one [soliloquy] in all [Shakespeare's] works that can be excused by nature or reason" *(Shakespeare*, II, 371). We do not meet an equally obtuse opinion on the "To be, or not to be" soli-

[42]See *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), pp. 457-59.

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loquy, though held for different reasons than Gildon's, till we reach Charles Lamb.

In 1701 John Dennis complained about the main content of most of the tragedies that he saw being written during his time. In the Epistle Dedicatory prefixed to *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701), Dennis deplores the fact that "in most of our heroes which have lately appeared on the stage, love has been still the predominant passion, whether they have been Grecian or Roman heroes; which is false in morality, and of scandalous instruction, and as false and absurd in physics" *(Hooker*, I, 203). Dennis again expressed a similar opinion in his Essay "On the Degeneracy of the Public Taste," 1725 *(Hooker*, II, 275-76). This partly explains the popularity of *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century. In this play, to use Hanmer's words, love is "but an under-passion" (p. 47). Lord Shaftesbury was the first to state this opinion specifically in connection with *Hamlet*. This play, wrote Shaftesbury in 1710, "contains no adoration or flattery of the [fair] sex; no ranting at the gods; no blustering heroism; nor anything of that curious mixture of the fierce and tender which makes the hinge of modern tragedy, and nicely varies it between the points of love and honour."[43] *Hamlet* was thus a refreshing change after the Restoration tragedy. Hanmer has a concise but comprehensive paragraph which brings out clearly almost all aspects of this subordinate passion in *Hamlet*. "In Hamlet's leaping into Ophelia's grave," writes Hanmer, "we have the first real proof of his love for her, which during this whole piece has been forced to submit to passions of greater weight and force, and here is suffered to break out chiefly, as it is necessary towards the winding up of the piece . . . [Love] seems to be introduced more to conform to the plan our poet built upon than for anything else; though as the whole play is managed, it conduces towards the conclusion, as well as it diversifies, and adds beauties to the whole piece" (p. 47).

Hamlet criticism in the eighteenth century is indeed a huge, and even amorphous, unweeded garden. Most literary writers of the period were attracted by this play; they had a bad, when not a good word for it; though as we have seen, it was usually the latter. One cannot pretend to cast any gems "into the Serbonian bog of *Hamlet* criticism"[44]

[43] *Characteristics* (see n. 16 above) p. 180.

[44] Robert Gale Noyes, "Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century Novel." E L H, 11(1944), 299.

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in the eighteenth century; only some directions here and there may perhaps be indicated.[45]

(To be concluded)

[45] I am grateful to Mr. William F.E. Morley, Curator of Special Collections, Douglas Library, Queen's University, Canada, and to Dr. Lawrence S. Thompson, Professor of Classics, University of Kentucky, Lexington, for readily sending me material not available locally. Professor R.W. Desai has done more for this article than I can adequately acknowledge here.

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NOTES

Hamlet's Satirical Rogue

SHANTI PADHI

Pol. What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Slanders, sir. For the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards . . . a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams — all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down.

(2.2.190-202)

At 2.2.167, Hamlet enters "reading on a book."[1] This book has not been identified so far to anyone's satisfaction.[2] It is not, as we might expect, a treatise on melancholia, demonology, "The Murder of Gonzago," or an early history of Amblet. But it seems to have a special dramatic function, though the generally accepted view is that the book is non-existent,[3] and the quotation from it quite spurious, invented for the nonce by Hamlet only to deflate Polonius.

Efforts to identify the book have been discouraged by the editor of the Arden edition, Harold Jenkins, as being "pointless" (p. 245). Nevertheless, if we can tell what book Shakespeare had in mind, it might reveal further facets of Hamlet's stage-personality and explain functional aspects of this scene in relation to others in the play.

Packed as the play is with topical allusions to corrugate its dimensions of reality and stretch the limits of theatrical art, Shakespeare would not have missed this opportunity to glance at some well-known work of his age, which the audience would recognise at once from the title on its sleeve or by Hamlet's pointed ascription of it to "the satirical rogue."

The book is evidently a substantial, sanctimonious, misanthropic

[1]Quotations and line references are from the Arden ed. (1982).

[2]Suggestions include Guazzo's *Civil Conversations* and Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*. Warburton's parallel from Juvenal's *Satires*, X, 188ff., seems far-fetched; Farmer doubted if Juvenal had been printed at this time: see note in Variorum ed. of *Hamlet* (Furness), Vol. I.

[3]Clarendon first expressed the view that Shakespeare did not allude to any particular book but invented the speech for himself.

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work, crammed with verbiage, which Hamlet dismisses in his mock-review beginning with the caption, "Words, words, words." It may have caught his attention initially by its sexual revulsions — the pseudo-religious prurience of aphorisms such as "Conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive, — friend, look to't." Taking this as a quotation from the book, one of the old actors (Fechter as Hamlet), laughed hysterically while pointing to the open page over which Polonius runs his eye (Furness, Variorum ed. *Hamlet*, Vol. 2, p. 254). Fechter was probably right in tracking the misogyny to an external source, instead of ascribing it to Hamlet. Other quotations from this book crop up later in the play.

At the end of the scene, if Hamlet's snideness is not merely affected madness but genuinely deprecatory, he must either throw the book into the nearest dustbin, or stow it in a niche in the gallery where he walks. Possibly, he tears out an offending page or two of these provocative slanders, to keep up his pretence of an "antic disposition" — pages which he later produces and quotes, with disastrous effect, while chiding Ophelia and flinging ferocious slanders against women as breeders of sin:

> I have heard of your paintings well enough. *[Produces pages from slanderous book, and reads:]* "God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another."
>
> (3.1.144-6. My stage directions)

These ideas are obviously borrowed, for they are out of pitch with his erstwhile "music vows," his true image of Ophelia, and those "thoughts of love" he had exchanged (with powerful osmosis) in the silence of Ophelia's closet. By again referring to the book (visually as well as figuratively) at this point, the action would explain that Hamlet's developing misogyny is aggravated not by Ophelia's alleged offences but by the misplaced words of a disgruntled and disillusioned "rogue." To validate such directions and play the scenes properly, we must investigate the book Hamlet reads.

Some actors playing Hamlet, especially those who don spectacles at 2.2, attempt to project the figure of a brooding, introspective bookworm from Wittenberg, somewhat neurotic, hypercritical of persons nearest to him, other-worldly, and ill-attuned to the sordid realities of court-life. It was to this kind of dehydrated pedant that Warburton assigned Juvenal's *Satires*, X, as a choice subject for dissertation. The audience, of course, would not have grasped such a learned allusion (if intended), even if the work was accessible to Shakespeare in a private translation.

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Only a few scholars, perhaps at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where the play was performed to great applause (according to the title-page advertisement), could possibly have sighted such mystical parallels as Warburton's. At any rate, Juvenal is unacceptable because we cannot think of Hamlet as an ossified classicist burrowing through ancient manuscripts as an intellectual pastime to escape from his main problems. He is, on the contrary, the "glass of fashion" and an avant garde drama-critic, with up-to-date literary tastes and modern sensibilities. The book he has picked up (and 'slams' *en passant)* is more likely to be one from the latest crop of best-sellers in Europe, with an anti-marital bias. It could be, I suggest, the famous *picaro* novel popularly known as *The Rogue* which hit all the bookstalls of Europe in 1599. This work (by Mateo Aleman), the precursor to *Don Quixote* by Shakespeare's greatest contemporary, had a phenomenal publishing history, eclipsing the sales records of all books of that period. An instant success, it sold out 30 editions within six years.

Hamlet's mock-review of *The Rogue*, which he bestows ironically upon that other rogue, Polonius, gains in sharpness if we realise that it pointed to a book which everyone had heard about. *The Rogue* was available in several languages, spawning sequels and spurious imitations. English translators lagged behind others,[4] but there is evidence to show that Shakespeare and Hamlet have some knowledge of its striking, vivid lines. Hamlet quotes from the very first chapter of the first book of the First Part:

> O affront, aboue all affronts! that God hauing giuen thee one face, thou shouldst abuse his image, and make thy selfe another.
>
> (tr. James Mabbe, *The Rogue, or Guzman de Alfarache*, London, 1622, 1.1.i. page 13).

It has not been noticed so far that Hamlet's words to Ophelia (3.1.144-6) are culled from this book of the satirical rogue.[5]

[4]Webster, Middleton and other dramatists make good use of it in later years. See Shanti Padhi, "Middleton's Wittol in *A Chaste Maid*, and *Guzman de Alfarache*," *N & Q* (June 1984), 234-6. The first English translation by James Mabbe was published in 1622, when Cervantes' great success drew attention to the work of his literary progenitor.

[5]"Si esto er a proprio no suer a justo, dandoselo Dios, que se tiznara la cara, ni arrojara en la calle semejantes prendas. . . . si esto es (aun en mugeres) vituperio, quanto lo sera mas en los hombres? O fealdad sobre toda fealdad, o afrenta de todas las afrentas!" *Primera parte de la vida del picaro* . . . by Mateo Aleman, Caragoca, 1599; folio 9 verso to 10). The writer refers to men who paint their

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If this is indeed Hamlet's satirical book of slanders, where the hypocritical rogue mixes sermons with sexy tales, and animadversions on marriage and women, pimps and wittols, avaricious old men and shameless young vagabonds, etc., Shakespeare does not seem to have reacted very favourably to the work. Partly, this was because he was ill-served by translators. In the play, Hamlet condems the picaresque book to oblivion because he feels swamped by its morass of words, words, words, its rambling humour and digressive satire. He needs spurs for action and deeds, not words, or the rogue's dishonest philosophical stances. The picaresque novel with its diffuse philosophical structure is the very antithesis of dramatic art. "The play's the thing" on which Hamlet and Shakespeare pin their faith. The sudden popularity of the new genre threatened the survival of drama on the continent. To counter such possible effects, perhaps, the snide review given by Hamlet is wittily drawn into the context of the play. At 2.2. Hamlet is able to reject the hypocrisies of the rogue as he gears himself up for action, unsapped by words; but their insidious effects remain with him when he launches his attack on women.

faces as worse than women. Mabbe translates: "And if God had giuen him these colours, as proper to him, was it fit that he should besoot his face, or . . . make such slight reckoning of God's goodness? . . ."

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"Pollux" for "pollax": An Emendation of *Hamlet* 1.1.66

ERIC RASMUSSEN

The cryptic "pollax" in *Hamlet* (1.1.66) has been read as either a sixteenth-century spelling of 'pole-axe'[1] or a phonetic spelling of 'Polacks.'[2] Both of these readings, however, ignore the possibility of a printing-house error. Shakespeare's manuscript 'u' often appears to be an ill-formed 'a.'[3] Consequently, a:u misreadings are common in the 1604 quarto of *Hamlet* (Q2) which was set from Shakespeare's foul papers: "sallies" for "sullies" 2.1.40, "quietas" for "quietus" 3.1.75, "raine" for "ruine" 3.3.22, and usually "Gertrard" for "Gertrude." The handwriting of the scribe of the 1603 quarto (Q1) was also subject to a:u misreading: "scalion" for "scullion" at 2.2.583. Given the relative frequency of a:u misreadings in the texts of *Hamlet*, it seems more than likely that "pollax" is not an extraordinary spelling, but a simple misreading of "Pollux"—the mythological hero-divinity, brother of Castor, and one of the Dioscuri, the "Heavenly Twins" of the constellation Gemini.

While it is possible that the Q1 "pollax" and the Q2 "pollax" resulted from independent a:u misreadings, it is more likely that the "pollax" for "Pollux" misreading originated in Q1, and was transmitted to the second quarto when the Q2 compositor, unable to decipher Shakespeare's manuscript, simply copied the Q1 reading.[4] The Folio then inherited the error from Q2. All three texts are in substantial agreement concerning Horatio's description of the confrontation between King Hamlet and Norway:

[1]See David Haley, "Gothic Armaments and King Hamlet's Poleaxe," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 29 (1978), 407-12.

[2]Pope (1725) was the first to emend "pollax" to "Polack." Malone pluralized this to "Polacks," which has since become the accepted reading.

[3]See Shakespeare's pages of the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript, especially "nature" at line 126; facsimile in E.M. Thompson, *Shakespeare's Handwriting* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1916).

[4]John Dover Wilson proposes a similar scenario to explain the famous "sallied" / "sullied" crux at 1.2.129, in *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1934), p. 311.

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Such was the very Armor he had on,
When he the ambitious Norway combated,
So frownd he once, when in an angry parle
He smot the sleaded pollax on the ice.
(1.1.63-66)[5]

Norway challenges Hamlet to single-handed combat, the winner to receive all of the lands of the loser. There is a close analogue to this challenge and combat in the mythological story of Pollux's fight with King Amycus, told by both Theocritus (*Idyll XXII.* 27-134) and Apollonius (*Argonautica II.*1-97). Amycus, the King of Bebrycos, challenges Pollux to box with him: "Lift your hands against me in single combat, having stood man against man" (*Idyll XXII.* 65).[6] Compare the challenge in *Hamlet*: "by Fortinbrasse of Norway, / Thereto prickt on by a most emulate pride / Dar'd to the combat" (1.1.85-87). The loser is to be at the absolute disposal of the winner: "I will be called thine, or thou shalt be called mine, if I shall have conquered" (*Idyll XXII.*71). Compare the similar pact in *Hamlet*:

. . . this Fortinbrasse, who by a seald compact
Well ratified by lawe and heraldy
Did forfait (with his life) all these his lands
Which he stood seaz'd of, to the conquerour.
Against the which a moitie competent
Was gaged by our King, which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbrasse,
Had he bin vanquisher;
(1.1.89-96)

Shakespeare probably would have known Theocritus's *Idylls* either in a Latin version or through an early translation.[7] The similarities between the Hamlet/Norway combat and the Pollux/Amycus fight are obvious, and it is entirely appropriate for Horatio, the "scholar" (1.1.45), to include an allusion to Pollux in his description of the confrontation.

[5]All quotations are from the second quarto of *Hamlet* (London: James Roberts, 1604-5). Act, scene, and line numbers refer to those in Harold Jenkins's New Arden edition (London: Methuen, 1982).

[6]*The Idylls of Theocritus, Bion, and Moscus*, trans., J. Banks (London: Bell and Daldy, 1870).

[7]See Robert Thomas Kerlin, *Theocritus in English Literature* (Lynchburg, Virginia J.P. Bell, 1910), pp. 5, 31-2.

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The mythological Pollux provides not only an analogue to the Hamlet/Norway fight, but an ironic counterpart to one of the basic themes of the play as well. Pollux and Castor were seen as the archetype of brotherly love. In Holland's translation of Plutarch's *Moralia*, the chapter "Of Brotherly Love" begins with the Dioscuri twins, "the two brethren Castor and Pollux" and notes "the brotherly amitie of the said two gods" and "that undivisible union which was between them."[8] Horatio's allusion to Pollux is thus an initial hint of brotherly amity in a play laced with the archetypal brotherly animosity of Cain and Abel (see 1.2.105, 3.3.37, 5.1.75).

While the proposed emendation of "pollax" to "Pollux" is admittedly not perfect (it does not, for instance, explain the problematic "sleaded"),[9] it does have the advantage of being more bibliographically probable than the previous "phonetic spelling" theories, and it does provide a rich reading which is germane to the opening scene of *Hamlet*, perhaps in a way that gothic weapons and Poles on sleds are not.

[8] *The philosophie, commonlie called The morals written by Plutarch*, trans., Philemon Holland (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1603), p. 174.

[9] Since "sleaded pollax" originates in a reported text, with no direct link to Shakespeare's manuscript, "sleaded", like "pollax" is not necessarily authoritative. The Q1 reporter often misunderstood the words he had heard—while he got the sound of the word, he had the wrong meaning: i.e. "ceasen" for "season" 1.2.192; "impudent" for "impotent" 1.2 29; and "with tongue invenom'd speech" for "with tongue in venom steep'd " 2.2.506. Quite possibly, "sleaded" may be another of the Q1 reporter's homonymic errors, perhaps for 'dreaded,' which would be a more appropriate epithet for Pollux. Likewise, "yce" may be a mishearing of 'eyes.' Being prone to such homonymic errors, it is not inconceivable that what the Q1 reporter heard was "He smote the dreaded Pollux on the eyes" which he interpreted as "He smot the sleaded pollax on the yce."

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Melancholy, Madness, and Syphilis in *Hamlet*

GREG BENTLEY

In *Hamlet*, as Bridget Lyons has pointed out, the motifs of melancholy, madness, and disease unite and, in a sense, climax in the graveyard scene.[1] What has not received adequate attention is the fact that amid all the gloom and "madness" in that scene, the disease Shakespeare directly alludes to is syphilis. When Hamlet asks how long a man may lie buried before he decays, the clown answers: "Faith, if 'a be not rotten before 'a die—as we have many pocky corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in— 'a will last you some eight or nine year."[2] Although this reference to the "pockes" follows logically from the discussion, its appearance in conjunction with the theme of melancholy, which (as Schücking, Lyons, and others have pointed out) Shakespeare unquestionably perceived within the framework of humoral physiology, may seem puzzling. However, was it not syphilis, considered by most Renaissance medical writers to be newly imported from America, that, because of its evident and indisputable contagiousness, challenged and ultimately defied the scholastic and integrating attempts of the doctors working in the Galenic tradition? If we recognize that prior to the discovery of blood circulation, usually attributed to Harvey, nothing challenged humoral physiology more than this disease, we may conclude that Shakespeare was perhaps writing loosely and casually, merely adding the reference to syphilis as a *non plus ultra* of human decay. If this were so, surely no one would fault the playwright for not perceiving contradictions in medical theory that contemporary medical writers had trouble harmonizing. There is, however, a Renaissance tradition in medical thinking, although perhaps a minor one, which links syphilis and melancholy, and I would argue that Shakespeare's references to venereal disease in *Hamlet* have to be seen in the light of that tradition.

During the Renaissance, syphilographers attributed several causes to syphilis, and one fairly common one was melancholy. For instance,

[1]Bridget Gellert Lyons, *Voices of Melancholy: Studies in Literary Treatment of Melancholy in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971) pp. 72-112

[2]*Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Hardin Craig (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1961), p. 938. All my references are to this edition.

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in his poem on syphilis, "Tratado Sobre los Pestiferos Bubas" (stanza forty-three: "Of the signs when it [syphilis] comes from melancholy that is adust"), Francisco Lopez de Villalobos says of the pustules:

> But if the adustion should chance to have its place
> In the melancholy humour, they are cold and dry;
> They are large, and itching is not here the case,
> And with these is the worst deformity of face,
> As to tediousness of cure, they all others far outvie.[3]

Inversely, syphilis was often thought to cause melancholy. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, for example, even Robert Burton, speaking of bodily causes for melancholy, writes that, "Botaldus in his book *de lues vener.* cap. 2, [cites] the French pox for a cause."[4] Whether as a cause or effect, then, syphilis and melancholy were, in some cases, inextricably linked.

Both melancholy and syphilis, moreover, were thought to cause madness. Once again, Robert Burton, in his chapter "Of the Matter of Melancholy," says that melancholy "If it trouble the mind, as it is diversely mixed, it produceth several kinds of madness and dotage."[5] Similarly, Paracelsus says that when syphilis infects the brain it too causes madness. In chapter six, "Of madness or idlenesse of the head called Insania," he writes:

> The idlenesse or madnesse in the head, called in Latin Insania, proceedeth of a certaine venemous humor or dampe, ascending from the stomache and liver into the braines, and because the braines through the infection of the Pockes, or some such like cause is become weake and tender, they are not able to repell or drive backe the sayde dampe or humor, but remaine vanquished and overcome of the same in such sort, that they forget to doo their office, going quite out of order, so that the Patient hath no rule of himself but dooth and speaketh he knoweth not what.[6]

[3]Francisco Lopez de Villalobos, "Tratado Sobre los Pestiferos Bubas" in *The Medical Works of Francisco Lopez de Villalobos: The Celebrated Court Physician of Spain*, trans. George Gaskoin (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), p. 114.

[4]Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pt. 1, sec. 2, p. 376.

[5]Ibid., pt. 1, sec. 1, p. 174.

[6]Paracelsus, *An Excellent Treatise teaching how to cure the French Pockes . . . Drawne out of the books of that learned Doctor and Prince of Phisitians, Theophrastus Paracelsus. Compiled by the learned Phillippus Hermanus, Phisitian and Chirurgion. And now put into English by John Hester. . . .* (London, 1590), p. 43.

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Thus, according to Renaissance medical theories, melancholy, syphilis, and madness seem to be three interchangeable points on an equilateral triangle.

And it is this trilateral association that Shakespeare draws upon in *Hamlet*. For instance, even though Gertrude never doubts Hamlet's melancholy "distemper," she seems confident that Polonius or Claudius will find a cure for his "antic" behavior; she seems quite sure that Hamlet is not completely insane. However, when Hamlet sees his father's ghost in her chamber, Gertrude is finally convinced that his melancholic imagination has driven him mad. After Hamlet tells her that he is sane, though, and that by calling him "mad" she is trying to cover her own shame, Shakespeare, because of the association among melancholy, madness, and syphilis, naturally has Hamlet use an image of syphilis to convince Gertrude of her own guilt. Although tenderly, Hamlet says bluntly:

> . . . Mother, for love of grace,
> Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
> That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
> It will but skin and film the ulcerous place
> Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
> Infects unseen. . . .
>
> (3.4.144-49)

Although there were many treatments for syphilis during the Renaissance, unctions were one of the most common. William Clowes, for instance, the first English syphilographer, entitled his book: *A Short and profitable Treatise touching the cure of the disease called Morbus Gallicus by Unctions*.[7] Although he describes many unctions and ointments, Clowes most highly recommends those made with *argentum vivum* or mercury. In contrast, many other syphilographers, as does Hamlet in this scene, argued that unctions, while soothing and occasionally healing the cutaneous lesions, were ineffective against syphilis, so that the disease secretly ravaged its unsuspecting victim. In stanza forty-nine of "Tratado Sobre los Pestiferos Bubas," for example, Villalobos claims that mercurial unctions merely numb the skin, that their only benefit is temporarily to ease the pain. Arguing against those who advocate unctions, he says:

[7]William Clowes, *A Short and profitable Treatise touching the cure of the disease called Morbus Gallicus by Unctions* (London: John Daye, 1579).

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With mercury and lard they use an infrication,
By sinister means this their object they effect.
The quicksilver, being mortificative,
Doth only serve to numb and to stupefy;
The fat soothes a skin over-sensitive,
And the mercury is made to be more penetrative,
In killing all sensation the great benefit doth lie.[8]

In the following stanza Villalobos argues that as soon as the unction loses its strength, the ulcer and pain reappear. Despite the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of mercurial unctions in treating syphilis, though, Hamlet's words act as a "cure" for Gertrude; she promises to keep his guise, his feigned madness, a secret.

In fact, after pledging her faith to Hamlet, Gertrude convinces Claudius that Hamlet is mad, and Claudius (or Shakespeare again) naturally associates melancholy and madness with syphilis. When Claudius asks Gertrude, "How does Hamlet?" she replies: "Mad as the sea and wind when both contend / Which is the mightier." When Gertrude tells him that Hamlet has killed Polonius, Claudius says that they will ultimately be blamed, that they "should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt, / This mad young man." Almost immediately, and hypocritically, he adds:

. . . so much was our love
We would not understand what was most fit;
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. . . .

(4.1.19-23)

Although Claudius does not actually name the disease, from the descriptions already given, particularly that of Hamlet's to Gertrude just cited, he clearly has syphilis in mind. His phrase "To keep it from divulging," moreover, suggests a common practice during the Renaissance. Because syphilis caused such unsightly sores and leisons, many victims tried to hide their disease. Ulrich von Hutten, for instance, probably Germany's most celebrated syphilitic, traveled all over the Continent and undertook innumerable "cures" in order to prevent the disease from marring his appearance. He was particularly concerned about pre-

[8]Villalobos, p. 117.

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serving his mouth and tongue, those organs which were most commonly disfigured through improper treatment. At the same time, though, von Hutten was just as concerned about not letting the disease corrupt his internal organs. In his book *De Morbo Gallico*, for instance, at the end of chapter five, he says:

> that all though my legges were eaten with so many depe and grevous soores [which he could easily cover], yet was there not one synewe hurt / nor one bone peryshed. And if any tyme the disease toke my face, no evylle happened to my mouthe and tongue, so that the inwarde partes were preserved — for I voyded awaye those thynges, that myghte hurt my stomake, and with rare helpe defended my lyghtes [sic] and lounges.[9]

Most syphilitics. though, besides wanting to preserve their health and appearance, probably tried to hide their infections because people who had contagious diseases could be legally removed from society. According to Sir William Holdsworth, in his chapter on defamation during the Renaissance, a person's words could be construed as slanderous "if they impute the commission of a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, or a contagious disease which would exclude a person from society."[10] Two paragraphs later, moreover, Holdsworth adds that "the imputation of a contagious disease seems to have been confined to statements that a person defamed was suffering from leprosy, the plague, or syphilis — the accusation of having contracted the last mentioned disease being much the most common in the reports (pp. 348-49). Although many people were apparently falsely accused of having syphilis, many more had actually contracted the disease, and they were frequently removed from society. Von Hutten, for instance. having publicized his affliction, died an impoverished outcast. Even if syphilitics could conceal the external symptoms, however, the infection, as Claudius says in his analogy, still corrupted and decayed the very "pith of life."

Thus, even though Shakespeare refers to syphilis only three times in *Hamlet*, those three references illustrate his knowledge of complex contemporary medical and psychological theories, his awareness of the association among melancholy, madness, and syphilis. More impor-

[9]Ulrich von Hutten, *De Morbo Gallico*, trans. from the Latin into English by Thomas Paynell, 1533.

[10]Sir William Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, 8 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1926), p. 347.

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tantly, though, they help illustrate the play's central theme: that although the kingdom appears healthy and sound, it is "rotten;" that just as syphilis inevitably destroys its victim, often in a spasm of melancholic madness, moral and political corruption inexorably destroy the state, frequently in a fit of insanity as violent as that with which Shakespeare concludes the play.

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Hamlet: Is He *Still* Delaying?

ROBERT E. BURKHART

Perhaps the fact that I began teaching Shakespeare at the upper division and graduate levels using G.B. Harrison's edition of the complete works has influenced me more than I realized at the time. Whether or not that is the case—and even though I have changed texts several times over the years—I feel that Harrison's comments make a useful starting point: "*Hamlet* is usually considered a play of problems; and the problem which has chiefly exercised the critics is why did he delay? To which the answer is that in the play which Shakespeare wrote there was no delay."[1]

In order to begin with a stance at least mildly controversial, I will commit myself as being in essential agreement with Harrison. It is necessary, however, to qualify that commitment with certain definitions, and I am not merely quibbling over terms. Much of the supposed controversy has to do with what is meant by certain labels.

To *delay* means to put off or postpone. This basic denotative meaning, moreover, carries with it the connotation of indecision. Hamlet does not delay in these senses.

Yet clearly Hamlet does at times fail to act. I would argue that such failures are the result of his more or less consciously *deciding not to act.* The result may be the same—something is not done—but the difference in terms of character assessment is significant: delay is indecisive, whereas choosing not to act is a form of decision.

In order to present some sort of reasonable survey of the topic, I have selected a sampling of scholarly comment on the delay question drawn from works dealt with by Morris Weitz in his *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism.*[2]

The survey can proceed from A.C. Bradley, who in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* accepts delay as a basic fact of the play. He refutes several proposed explanations for delay, and he emphasizes in his own theory Hamlet's melancholy.[3]

Ernest Jones also accepts the concept of delay, but to him "the cause

[1] *Shakespeare's Tragedies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 109.

[2] (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1966).

[3] See Weitz, pp. 3-8.

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of Hamlet's hesitancy lies in some unconscious source of repugnance to his task."[4] This repugnance, however, is based upon acceptance of the psychoanalytic theory that "it links itself with the unconscious call of his nature to kill his mother's husband, whether this is the first or second."[5]

Although E.E. Stoll does not deny delay in *Hamlet*, he attempts to explain it in dramatic rather than psychological terms.[6] Delay is required to enhance the magnitude of the deed, and the self-reproaches along the way are essentially reminders to the audience.

L.L. Schücking also seeks explanations in dramatic terms. He contends that stated motives, as in the prayer scene, are generally correct.[7] To regard such statements as rationalization is to seek a complicated solution when a simple one will suffice.

Although J. Dover Wilson is another critic who emphasizes delay in the play, he argues that the "procrastination does not become really glaring until after the Gonzago-play."[8] He also, by the way, disagrees with Stoll.

Weitz himself concludes that "the dramatic evidence is so overwhelming in the text that few critics deny" Hamlet's delay.[9] The chief points of contention, he feels, are concerned with its significance or, as in G.B. Harrison's case, with redefining the criteria for delay.[10]

We have come, then, full circle to Harrison once again. He begins by reminding us "that *Hamlet* is a play, and not a treatise on philosophy, psychiatry, Elizabethan history, or social ethics."[11] He also notes that in the revenge play tradition "the original murderer is appropriately dispatched" in the final act.[12] If we have an impulsive avenger, we have no revenge play.

Hamlet is, in fact, a bit rash in his first encounter with the Ghost (1.4).[13] In spite of Horatio's warning, he follows the spirit. Subsequent events, of course, make it clear that Hamlet has not forgotten the warning.

[4]Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1949), p. 127.
[5]Ibid., p. 90.
[6]See Weitz, pp. 50-51.
[7]*Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959). pp. 214-216
[8]J. Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p 202.
[9]Weitz, p. 240.
[10]Ibid., pp. 240-241.
[11]Harrison, p. 88.
[12]Ibid . p. 90.
[13]All references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*.

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In the final scens of Act 1 Hamlet is charged to avenge the murder and is given the details. Once the murder has been mentioned, he wants the details so that he "May sweep to my revenge" (1.5.31). By the end of that scene he is already in motion: Horatio and Marcellus are sworn to secrecy, and Hamlet is thinking about putting on his antic disposition. Only the last few lines give any hint of hesitation. Although Hamlet is not ready to kill Claudius, he is clearly eager to learn more about the situation. So far we have no delay, only indications of common sense.

Act 2 begins with expressions of concern over Hamlet's behavior — first from Ophelia and Polonius, then (2.2) from Claudius. Hamlet, we already know, is suspicious, and Claudius is uneasy. The situation demands caution on both sides. We see this caution reflected in the King's initiating the plot with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and in Hamlet's later reaction to his old friends.

Yet in this same scene—again, only the second scene of the second act — Hamlet sets up, at the first such opportunity, the plan of the play. In the "rogue and peasant slave" soliloquy he criticizes himself (although no one else has), but he immediately details his plot to expose his uncle's guilt and thus to test the Ghost, which he now recalls may be an evil spirit. (The self-criticism in this soliloquy and "How all occasions" can in fact be read as impatience to act rather than as evidence for delay). He is also perfectly aware of "my weakness and my melancholy" (601), a point hardly characteristic of one given to rationalization, statement of false motives, or psychological problems involving a false self-image.

That Hamlet continues in conscious effort to clarify the situation is made clear in 3.1. Guildenstern comments on his "crafty madness" (8), and Rosencrantz notes the "kind of joy" in Hamlet's reaction to the news of the players (18), an indication from another character — as we have already had from Hamlet himself — that he welcomed the opportunity to test Claudius and the Ghost. The "To be, or not to be" soliloquy emphasizes the effects of thought upon action, and it characterizes those effects unfavourably. Clearly he wants to get on with his business.

In the next scene (3.2) we see Hamlet before the test:

> If his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech.
> It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy.
>
> (80-84)

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We also see his reaction afterward:

> O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound.
>
> (286-287)

The dramatic focus is on the truthfulness of the Ghost, and his veracity is never again questioned. Hamlet's final speech of the scene — "'Tis now the very witching time of night" (387 ff.) — comes after Polonius summons him to the Queen and shows that the Ghost's instruction concerning Gertrude is in his mind.

The chance encounter of the prayer scene (3.3) is, of course, a staple in the delay argument. Several basic points need to be made about it. The first is that Hamlet enters *after* the speech in which Claudius has shown that he cannot repent. Since Hamlet believes the King to have repented, he is thus (second point) theologically correct in his conclusion that killing him would send Claudius to heaven. Finally, there is no reason to assume that Hamlet is rationalizing here unless we have already assumed that he has delayed earlier, and I have tried to show that such is not the case. Assumptions built upon assumptions do not make for sturdy evidence.

Furthermore, it is difficult to argue that Hamlet is delaying in 3.3 when he kills Polonius in 3.4, the scene in Gertrude's room. Moreover, his line, "I took thee for thy better" (3.4.32), indicates that he thought he had found the King in circumstances such as he had described in the earlier scene.

Hamlet's speech to the Ghost (which Harrison ignores) is again self-criticism):

> Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
> That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
> Th' important acting of your dread command?
>
> (106-108)

Probably these lines and the Ghost's response are best explained as disgusted reaction to Hamlet's just having failed to kill the right man, rather than as an expression of general delay on his part.

As we move into the fourth act, we must confront Dover Wilson's comment about post-Gonzago play procrastination. The obvious answer comes from Harrison, who notes that "'at the same time that Hamlet learns for certain that Claudius is indeed guilty, he reveals to Claudius

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that he knows all."[14] Hamlet is a constant threat and therefore constantly threatened, as Claudius reminds us with his "How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!" (4.3.2).

The last significant point in the delay argument is the soliloquy in 4.4:

> How all occasions do inform against me,
> And spur my dull revenge!
>
> (32-33)

Again the best explanation is simply that Hamlet is reacting impatiently to his own lack of results as contrasted with the obvious activity of Fortinbras. He concludes that it is time for bloody thoughts rather than for continuing the cat and mouse game (the roles being uncertain) with Claudius.

From this point an air of action pervades the play. (Hamlet is not moving from delay to action, but from careful action to reckless action.) 4.5 shows us the impulsive Laertes as contrasted with the careful and deliberate Hamlet. But Hamlet's letter to Horatio in 4.6 indicates further movement, and the one to Claudius in 4.7 implies a coming confrontation. Scenes and 7 both contain talk of unlimited revenge. 5.1 functions partly to relieve the built-up tension, partly to prepare us for the deaths of the final scene.

We have in the last scene a totally active Hamlet, from his account of his handling of the Rosencrantz-Guildenstern affair to his scoring the first two hits against Laertes. He has treated his old friends unfairly, and his final revenge takes along a significant portion of the population. Methodical revenge is even worse in that regard than is Laertes's impulsive variety. Fortinbras comes out well by being a non-avenger.

In a recent article questioning some of the assumptions of those who regard delay as significant to the play, G.F. Hartford presents a general assessment of the state of critical views on the matter of delay.[15] He quotes Kenneth Muir[16] concerning a smaller "non-delay" and a larger "delay" group of critics. This description is probably still a fair assess-

[14]Harrison, p. 102.

[15]"Once More Delay," *English Studies in Africa*, 20 (1977), 1-9. See also John A.S. Phillips, "Why Does Hamlet Delay? — Hamlet's Subtle Revenge," *Anglia*, 98 (1980), 34-50 Phillips argues that Hamlet's "procrastination represents a form of revenge at a deeper psychological level which itself is more consistent with Hamlet's character and disposition" (49).

[16]Hartford, 1.

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ment of the situation,[17] but again we must turn to terminology.

No one denies that Hamlet delays in the sense of not acting immediately; to do so would be to argue against the obvious facts of the play. The disagreement lies in how his not acting is explained. The "non-delay" group of Professor Muir's classification consists essentially of those taking views along the lines that I have presented. The "delay" group follows the procrastination line, with its implications of psychological problems, rationalization, false motives, and indecision.

Given, however, the non-delay minority and the thrust of Hartford's argument, it seems at least possible that we are seeing once again a pattern so often apparent in Shakespeare studies: a supposedly standard view gradually giving way to a more questioning attitude. (Consider, for example, the issue of the political orthodoxy of the history plays — once generally accepted, now seriously questioned.) Something of the sort may be happening, carefully and deliberately, with the issue of Hamlet's delay.

[17]No mortal can digest the continuing mass of *Hamlet* scholarship unless he has nothing else to do. It seems, however, that recent criticism tends either to assume or, more often, to ignore Hamlet's delay. Between 1968 and 1983, for example, no article or note in *Shakespeare Quarterly* deals with the problem other than incidentally.

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The Backstage *Hamlet*

ROBERT F. WILLSON, JR.

Maynard Mack, Anne Righter, and Wendy Coppedge Sanford, among others, have emphasized the centrality of the theatrical metaphor in *Hamlet*.[1] More than any of the major tragedies, *Hamlet* employs the language, conventions, and style of Elizabethan play practice. For this reason, "The Murder of Gonzago" qualifies as the thematic and metaphoric centre of the play: it catches the conscience of the king by means of a device — the play within — that explores the vital relationship between appearance and reality.

But Claudius does not confess his guilt to the audience-on-stage following *The Mousetrap*. He calls for lights, but aside from Hamlet and Horatio, the other viewers seem to believe with Gertrude that the king is not well. We soon learn that Claudius has gone to his chamber to pray; it is here (in 3.3) that Hamlet will observe him apparently seeking forgiveness for his crime.[2] Believing that his uncle has attained a state of grace in his confessional, Hamlet vows to wait for a fitter time and continues on to Gertrude's closet to convince her that she should sever all ties with this "villain." There he hears Polonius cry out from behind the arras and, thinking he is the king, stabs and kills him. Raging now in the manner of a Puritan divine, he forces Gertrude to look into her tainted soul and must be restrained by the Ghost, who reminds him of his proper task. This critical phase in the action of *Hamlet* takes place on the back stairs of the castle; Shakespeare, however, transforms this area into the tiring-house, lending to the events a theatricality that underscores their significance.

If "The Murder of Gonzago" can be said to take place on the 'stage' of Elsinore's banquet or throne room, then the chambers of Gertrude and Claudius might easily be seen as changing rooms located in the actor's house identified by de Witt.[3] The play within has invited us to

[1] "The World of *Hamlet*," *Yale Review*, 41 (1952), 502-523; *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (London Chatto and Windus, 1962), pp. 138-147; *Theater as Metaphor in "Hamlet"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

[2] All quotations are from Sylvan Barnet, gen. ed., *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).

[3] See J.L. Styan, *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 10-12.

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observe parallels between Claudius and Gertrude and the Player King and Queen; certainly they are so in Hamlet's mind. Their escape to those rooms to attempt confession (Claudius) or to be 'prompted' to assume a different role (Gertrude) helps us to understand the importance of the action that takes place in these locations. It is as if this behind-the-scenes 'plot' serves as the only means of discovering the true state of the characters' minds.

Claudius at prayer can be said to desire a new role or livery, smelling as he does the rankness of his offense (lines 36-38). More precisely, he realizes he must give up the props—his crown and queen—that he seized when he killed his brother. Yet Claudius discovers in the course of his monologue that he still covets the trappings of the part he has usurped (lines 54-55). Shakespeare may here be calling attention to another convention of performance: doubling.[4] That is, the Player King knows that he should put on another part — penitence—at this point in the plot, but he has become so accustomed to his first persona that he cannot give it up. Claudius also understands that heaven sits as audience to his performance; like a poor player unable to move his hearers, his "words fly up," but his "thoughts remain below." The result is a firmer resolve to play the villain's role, a decision that bodes ill for Hamlet.

In both these tiring-room scenes, an unseen auditor misunderstands what is taking place in the action he observes. Hamlet, the impatient auditor who leaves before the performance ends, believes Claudius has changed his costume, his soul now attired in a gown of grace. This misconception underscores Hamlet's failure to distinguish between appearance and reality and proves that he lacks the insight to be a proper audience. Here we are meant to recall the mistake he made in believing that the player shed genuine tears when he recited the tale of Priam and Hecuba (see 2.2.556-67). This error means that Hamlet has lost his best chance to avenge his father's murder; to play Lucianus, nephew to this Player King.[5]

When he arrives at Gertrude's closet, Hamlet now prepares to take on the prompter-director's identity. He will preach to Gertrude about the need to attire herself in more chaste garb. Before he proceeds, how-

[4]Leading actors took only one role, of course, but the function of the play within is to create the illusion of two pairs of monarchs. See Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 71-72.

[5]Righter, pp. 146-147, sees Hamlet too as a Player King, sending his mock royal order to the English king.

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ever, he first blindly murders Polonius, the hidden auditor whom he mistakes for the king. (That a confessed and contrite man would then hurry off to a place from which he can spy on another is an improbability that Hamlet never seems to reflect upon.) Shakespeare underscores the horrible error of the deed by arranging for it to take place in this backstage setting. That is, the appropriate stage for his revenge would have been the one on which "The Murder of Gonzago" was acted: a theater with a proper audience. But here in Gertrude's closet, such a murder has about it the trappings of villainy and intrigue that attended the murder of Hamlet's father. If the victim had been Claudius, in other words, how would Hamlet have explained such a rash and bloody deed? Following the theatrical metaphor, the central event of the 'play' would have occurred in a tiring-room.

With Polonius as silenced audience, Hamlet launches into his Jeremiad against the strumpet's part of Gertrude. So cruel is this attack that the Ghost must enter—another prompter—to remind his son of *his* proper identity. (Such prompting-direction suits well with the backstage setting, where rehearsal of lines must have sometimes taken place during the play performance.) Recalling the tone of Hamlet's earlier instructions to the actors of *The Mousetrap* (3.2.), the Ghost turns the tables and reminds this chief actor that his present course runs counter to the purpose of the 'plot'. By violating these instructions he too becomes a bad actor, a ranter somewhat in the style of the Herod figure.[6] Yet he manages to turn her eyes inward—"thou hast cleft my heart in twain," she declares—and secures the promise from her that she will alter her relationship with Claudius. The cruel force with which Hamlet has achieved his end speaks poorly for his own self-control, however. That his directive to "Confess yourself to heaven" and to "repent what's past" is delivered with Polonius's bleeding corpse at his feet creates a heavy mood of irony in this scene. He has managed to change his mother's role but at a heavy cost to her and to himself. Now Claudius has the pretext he needs to eliminate his chief opponent. In the language of the theatrical metaphor, the director's function now shifts completely into the villain's hands.

Confession emerges as the ritual which Shakespeare represents in the metaphor of a tiring-house change of costume. It serves effectively to illuminate the characters, the action, and the setting. Claudius's inability

[6]For a discussion of the ranting Herod tradition, see Thomas M. Parrott and Robert H. Ball, *A Short View Of Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 12-13.

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to win forgiveness leads to a hardening of his tyrant or "bloat king" identity, and Hamlet plays directly into his hands by killing Polonius. Gertrude, on the other hand, does undergo a change: from believer in Hamlet's madness to penitent ally in his crusade against Claudius. This change elevates her character as well because it comes about through a realization of her hastiness in marrying the usurper. These 'changes' are appropriately set in chambers that suggest the tiring-rooms of the Elizabethan theater; in a tragedy that teems with references to the world-as-stage and stage-as-world, they demonstrate how like actors are the human beings who people the world of *Hamlet*.

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Engineer, Sapper and Gunner: Kipling's Allusion and *Hamlet*

SUDHAKAR MARATHE

Rudyard Kipling's story "Watches of the Night" *(Plain Tales)* makes an allusion to *Hamlet* that is interesting in respect of the history of Shakespeare's words. It is a piquant tale of tables turned. The meddling wife of the Colonel of an army station makes a habit of creating rifts in other officers' married or amorous lives. She has made many people unhappy. One evening, while dressing to go out, the Colonel and subaltern Platte, who apparently own identical Waterbury watches, accidentally exchange their watches. On his way home, Platte, wearing the Colonel's watch, manages a fall from his horse and the watch is thrown near worldly-wise Mrs. Larkyn's house. Upon finding the watch, Mrs. Larkyn succeeds in planting a suggestion in the mind of the Colonel's Wife that the watch had been lost during an amorous escapade. This turn of events finally enables Platte and Mrs. Larkyn to implicate the Colonel himself in this fictitious escapade.

Thereafter, the Colonel's Wife is paid back amply in her own coin. A bitter and unresolved misunderstanding between her and her husband ensues on account of the Colonel's fictitious misdemeanour. Her implicit belief in the Colonel's guilt and her subsequent "tail-twisting" persecution of the poor man make the entire station happy and they laugh "heartlessly." With obvious irony Kipling compares the Colonel's Wife with Joan of Arc: "you sometimes see a woman who would have made a Joan of Arc in another century and climate, threshing herself to pieces over all the mean worry of housekeeping."[1] The story could readily admit allusion to either *The Comedy of Errors* or *The Taming of the Shrew*. But Kipling concludes, in the same ironic tone, with the following reference to *Hamlet*:

> Shakespeare alludes to the pleasure of watching an Engineer being shelled by his own Battery. Now this shows that poets should not write about what they do not understand. Any one could have told him that Sappers and Gunners are perfectly different branches of the Service.

[1] *Plain Tales* in the Burwash Edition of *The Complete Works of Kipling in Prose and Verse*, in the A.M.S. reprint, New York, 1970, Vol. 1, p. 109.

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> But, if you correct the sentence, and substitute Gunner for Sapper, the moral comes just the same.[2]

What he really means is that we should substitute the Colonel's Wife for Shakespeare who has committed a faux pas. Kipling's parallel between the Wife and the Engineer is also obvious. Kipling first loosely and mischievously paraphrases Hamlet's speech to his mother, in which he responds to his projected journey to England:

> For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
> Hoist with his own petar.
> (3.4)

Kipling's "corrected" version of these lines would be:

> For 'tis the sport to watch the Gunner
> Shelled by his own Battery.

Kipling uses "shelled" and "Battery" in place of "hoist" and "petar"; since he implicitly paraphrases the Elizabethan Enginer into the modern Sapper, he is able to suggest that Gunners and not Sappers man batteries. Then he implies—it is true lightheartedly and ironically—that Shakespeare did not understand what he was writing about, and that one could, as Shakespeare would have done well to do, substitute Gunner for Enginer. One purpose of this series of paraphrases could be to indicate the interesting interchange of roles among the characters of the story. At any rate, for Kipling, an Enginer is equal to a Sapper, and therefore should not be involved with a Gunner's engines. "The moral comes just the same," because the Colonel's Wife has been so thoroughly outsmarted at her own sport: this is, of course, the sense of the lines from *Hamlet*. She had clearly played the Gunner (i.e., the Enginer) for so long and now Mrs. Larkyn has show that she is really only a Sapper.

As for Shakespeare, did he neglect the distinction between Enginer and Sapper? Did he confuse Enginer with Gunner, as Kipling's allusion implies? Or was Shakespeare, in fact, a Pioner in his use of Enginer in *Hamlet*, 3.4? The questions suggest interesting points about two aspects of the fitness of Enginer in the ironic context of the play as a whole, and in the context of the imagery of hoisting and petar. For we must insist that "shelled" does not mean "hoist," nor does "Battery" mean "petar." Kipling's allusion questions not one but three words: Enginer,

[2]Ibid., p. 110.

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Hoist and Petar. And it directs our attention to the close fit between the words of an important Shakespeare speech in its total context.[3]

To begin with, Shakespeare not only knew the word Gunner but had used it earlier in *Henry V:*

> The offer likes not: and the nimble gunner
> With linstock now the devilish canon touches
> And down goes all before them. . . .
>
> (Act 3, Prologue; 1599)

It is also unlikely that he would have wanted to use, in the context of Hamlet's last substantial speech in Act 3, a word of restricted sense; for Gunner had an un-modern currency in the sixteenth century as a user of *small* guns, such as sporting and fowling pieces, and as the firer of cannon; it does not seem to have had the generalized sense of a man who deals with explosive devices. The Gunner as firer of cannon clearly performs an overt function, not the sort of covert function Hamlet has in mind. In any case, the sense of "firer of guns" would not have supported the subsequent image of "Hoist with his own petar"; nor would it have suggested the connotation "plotter." As for the contrast between Gunner and Sapper, it seems safe to say it would have been impossible in Shakespeare's English: the first discovered use of Sapper in the modern military sense as a constructor of fortifications appears as late as the late nineteenth century (though "sap," in the sense of fortification, has pre-Shakespearean currency).[4]

With Hoist and Petar Shakespeare was actually using *new* vocabulary. For Hoist the first discovered occurence is, in fact, *Hamlet*, 3.4. For Petar the only discovered pre-*Hamlet* occurrence is in Florio: "Petardo, a squib or petard gunpowder vsed to bvrst vp gates and doores with." For Enginer, though its pre-Shakespearean history is long, dating back to Middle English, its relevant sense seems to have remained constant well beyond the Elizabethan age: inventor, contriver, designer, constructor of military engines. Shakespeare extends the meaning

[3]Caroline Spurgeon does not appear to have examined this "hoisting" imagery.

[4]All the word histories used in this paper are taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The oldest cited reference in the *O.E.D.* does not make a contrast between Sapper and Enginer: 1626 Tr. *Boccalini's New-Found Politicke*, 92: "These are Tools belonging to Pioners, Sappers, Diggers", etc. Voyle and Stevenson's *Military Dictionary* (3d. ed. 1875), quoted in the *O.E.D.*: "Sapper, s.v. Engineers, on active service, an engineer officer is sometimes a sapper officer."

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to include an Enginer whose ingenuity proves self-destructive. The Latin „ingenium" is the root for both "engine" and "ingenious" (see "engine," *O.E.D.*).[5] Therefore, the possibility of a double-play upon the word was real in Shakespeare's day:

(a) an engineer being too clever for his own good with his destructive device.
(b) an engineer qua plotter having his own destructive plot turned against him.

Thus in *Hamlet* the word Enginer contains the sense of a deviser of a bomb and the sense of "plotter" as well. Further, it gives rise to the explosive diction and imagery of Hoist and Petar, and blowing them "at the moon." In this sense the three words Enginer, Hoist and Petar cohere in the passage, just as they give rise to the suggestion of the tables being turned upon the plotter of Hamlet's death.

The scene (3.4) opens with Polonius's reference to Hamlet's "sport":

> Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with.

Then Polonius withdraws behind the arras and is seen alive no more, for he soon becomes a victim of his own "broad prank." After reminding Gertrude of her first husband, driving home to her the ugliness of her relationship with Claudius, and instructing her to hide from Claudius his suspicions about his father's death, Hamlet mentions his imminent voyage to England. It is obvious that there are sinister circumstances associated with this voyage, although they will be revealed fully only after Hamlet's return from the voyage:

> Hamlet: I must to England, you know that?
> Queen: Alack,
> I had forgot. 'Tis so concluded on.
> Hamlet: There's letters *sealed*, and my two school-fellows,
> Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged,
> They bear the mandate — they must sweep my way
> And marshal me to *knavery*: let *it* work,
> For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
> Hoist with his own petar, and 't shall go hard

[5]Lucentio, in order to follow "a course of learning and ingenious studies," leaves Pisa, which was but "a shallow plash," and comes to Padua, "nursery of arts" *(Tam. Shr.* 1.1.1-24*)*.

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> But I will *delve* one yard *below their mines*
> And *blow them at the moon:* O, 'tis most sweet
> When in one line two *crafts* directly meet.
> This man shall set me packing. . .
> . . . This counsellor
> *Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,*
> *Who was in life a foolish prating knave.* . . . (my italics)

This speech has particular significance, in the context of plotting, in terms of the events both before and after the speech.

The activity of turning the plot upon the plotter is described as "the sport," with the suggestion of a certain kind of enjoyment in the justice of the recoiling. The game was, clearly, a deadly one, a final confirmation to either party in the revenge plot of the other's true intentions, and the words and phrases in italics suggest the secret and underhand activity that will now engage Hamlet. The couplet on Polonius with which the passage concludes is savagely ironic: Polonius, who in life was a garrulous bungler has, in death, become a skilful plotter. Therefore the passage and its reference to Enginer as plotter fits the ironic structure of the play. The structure depends upon the idea of the "enginer/ Hoist with his own petar." Not only does Act 5, scene 2 explain the detailed unfolding of this plot (i.e., design upon Hamlet's life), but also both before and after this episode we have several examples of Hamlet's ability to hoist other plotters with their own petars, in all of which the audience is favoured with special two-way knowledge of the action, so that the innocently prophetic speeches and half-knowing actions of the characters lead to irony.

The nunnery scene shows Hamlet returning Polonius's first plot, involving Ophelia, back upon him. The mouse-trap scene too has elements of similar hoisting, just as within Act 3.4 itself Polonius is conclusively hoisted. The end of the play too has some elements of recoil, although they are accidental: the exchange of two other destructive devices, the poison-tipped sword and the poisoned wine cup. Throughout the play there are also verbal parallels of hoisting, some in dialogue, others in asides, such as Hamlet's retorts to his mother and Claudius:

> A little more than kin, and less than kind. . . .
>
> Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun. . . .
>
> Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not 'seems'.
>
> (1.2)

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Poor Polonius suffers much from Hamlet's verbal hoisting him with his own words, as do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, not to mention their deaths resulting from Hamlet's counterplot, this being the example of hoisting which is given the most directly forward allusion in the speech in question.

This play owes much to knavery, sport, pretence, mines and countermines, "crafts" (plots) and "packing" (plotting). The Enginer and his hoisting belong to this general pattern. They also anticipate future events of the play and can pull together preceding events which contain the element of plotting. Shakespeare's double-play on the meaning of Enginer is essential to the play. Kipling is wrong. Shakespeare is right. Yet for Kipling "the moral comes just the same." As Enginer strengthens Shakespeare's meaning, so Kipling's allusion to it makes an apt and poignantly ironic conclusion for his story of malicious plots and poetically just counterplot.

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Woodcock et Bécasse: Avatars d'une métaphore shakespearienne

GERMAINE MARC'HADOUR

Les réflexions qui suivent ont leur origine dans une page d'Eugène Fromentin, faite en thème anglais avec des étudiants de licence. Décrivant le retour des migrateurs ailés dans le domaine des Trembles, le narrateur du roman Dominique (1862) dit qu'en plein hiver "un oiseau plus rare," la *bécasse*, apparaissait tout juste "une seconde, de façon à montrer son long bec droit." Inévitablement, on traduit *bécasse* par *woodcock*. Mais, s'ils désignent bien le même oiseau, "a game bird, brown with a long straight bill," les deux mots n'ont pas le même halo de suggestions, le même jeu d'associations.

Le bec de la bécasse est majoré par son nom français. Cet oiseau au long bec passe pour n'avoir pas de cervelle. Son genre grammatical le prédispose, en outre, ainsi que son diminutif *bécassine*, à désigner des femmes.[1]

La deuxième syllabe de *woodcock* lui confère une connotation inévitablement masculine. Il est même surprenant que ce mot n'ait pas deux formes, comme *moorcock/moorhen*, *peacock/peahen*. Devant servir pour l'un et l'autre sexes, *woodcock* semble avoir de la peine à maintenir son emploi figuré pour désigner l'étourderie, la naïveté, la nigauderie, "gullibility or folly," que l'on associe, peut-être arbitrairement, au *sexus infirmior*. Le dictionnaire d'Oxford (*O.E.D.*) définit *woodcock* "in allusive use, a fool, simpleton, dupe (from the ease with which the woodcock is taken in a snare or net)." Ce sens figuré est "obsolete or archaic." Il est pourtant attesté dans des documents si anciens, et par de si bons auteurs, qu'on l'êut cru à l'épreuve de la désuétude.

Sans la moindre ambition de tendre nos rets pour attraper toutes les bécasses de la littérature anglaise, prenons-en seulement une chez Thomas More. Dans *The Debellation of Salem and Bizance* (1533), ch. 14, More atteste que l'emploi de *woodcock* pour exprimer la naïveté simplette était proverbial en Angleterre. Répliquant à un livre du Chris-

[1]Le dictionnaire Robert dit que *bécasse*, au sens figuré, désigne une "femme sotte," et *bécassine* une "jeune fille niaise." Dans les glossaires médiévaux, *bécasse* est rendu soit par *woodcock*, soit par *snipe*, qui est plus "opprobrious" (voir *Othello* I, v, 391), venant d'une racine aggressive, la même que *snap*.

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topher Saint-Germain, il écrit: "This man aunswereth here as though he trusted that all the worlde wer woodcockes saue himself."[2] Les gens que Saint-Germain croyait duper sont en majorité des hommes — juristes, magistrats, parlementaires. L'usage français ne dirait pas qu'il "les prend pour des bécasses," le mot est trop féminin; on dirait "dindons" peut-être. Un annotateur relève un titre paru en 1613: *Laquei Ridiculosi, or Springes for Woodcocks*.[3] Samuel Butler, dans *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), utilise la double métaphore: "Tis but a springe to catch woodcocks."[4]

Venons-en au double emploi qui est à l'origine de cette note, dont le but est de signaler le pont rhétorique reliant le premier et le dernier acte de *Hamlet*, et réunissant Polonius à ses enfants en un faisceau. (a) Quand Ophelia dit à son père que le Prince Hamlet

> . . . hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
> With almost all the holy vows of heaven,

Polonius répond: "Ay, springes to catch woodcocks!" (1.3.115).

(b) Après que Laertes et Hamlet se sont blessés mutuellement avec la rapière à pointe envenimée, Osric demande: "How is't, Laertes?", et le jeune homme répond:

> Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric,
> I am justly killed with mine own treachery (5.2.288).

Notons que Shakespeare répète, non seulement *woodcock*, mais également *springe*. Les deux mots font la paire: *springe* (prononcé comme *hinge*, *fringe*, etc) accompagne *woodcock* plus souvent que son quasi-synonyme *gin* (le mot de *3 Henry VI* (1.4) et de *Twelfth Night* (2.4) aujourd'hui désuet), et surtout que *snare*, *net*, ou *trap*. Quels que soient les mots choisis comme équivalents français de *woodcock* et de *springe*, le traducteur doit répéter dans le dernier acte les mots du premier acte. Même si l'écho n'a pas été voulu par l'auteur, il demeure essential à la fidélité. Fils de Polonius, Laertes a sans doute emprunté cette métaphore au donneur de conseils et de mises-en-garde. Qui sait

[2]Chap. 14. Cet ouvrage est sous presse dans l'édition critique de *The Complete Works of St Thomas More* (Yale University Press, 1961 f.). J'ai cité d'après *The Workes of Sir Thomas More . . . in the Englysh tonge* (London, 1557), p. 958 E.

[3]Cité par R. Travers dans son édition de Paris, 1929. *Laquei* est le mot latin qui a donné *lacs*, *lacet*, *lasso*, etc. L'O.E.D. nous apprend que l'auteur en est Henry Parrot, et illustre l'emploi conjugué de *springe* et *woodcock* par des citations de Middleton et Decker, Dryden, Shelley, Tennyson.

[4]Cité par S.G. Dunn dans son édition de *Hamlet*, signée d'Allahabad en novembre 1913 (Oxford-Bombay-Madras: Humphrey Milford, 1914), p. 144.

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s'il ne se fait pas l'écho de son père, homme plein de mots — "words, words, words!", friand de poverbes et de similitudes? Les traducteurs n'ont pas toujours saisi cette répétition, autrement ils se seraient fait un devoir de la reproduire. Nous les rangeons dans l'ordre chronologique parce que la plupart doivent quelque chose à leurs prédécesseurs, soit qu'ils s'en inspirent, soit qu'ils s'en démarquent pour ne pas être taxés de plagiat, ou par souci d'originalité. P. de la première citation désigne Polonius dans l'acte I; L. de la seconde désigne Laertes dans l'acte V. Lorsque nous citons un peu de contexte, c'est afin de montrer parfois la tyrannie de la rime.

1. Pierre Le Tourneur (1776):
   P.:—Oui, des lacets bons à prendre les linottes étourdies.
   L.:—C'est que je suis pris dans mes propres filets.[5]

2. Ernest Fouinet (1837):
   P.:—Bah! pièges à prendre les bécasses!
   L.:—Tu vois l'oiseau pris dans le piège qu'il a tendu.

3. M.A. Berbrugger, revu par M. Robertson (1845):
   P.:—Oui, ce sont pièges pour prendre les bécasses.
   L.:—Semblable à une bécasse, je me suis laissé prendre dans mon propre piège, Osrick.

4. Paul Meurice, pour Alexandre Dumas (1846):
   P.:—Véritables trébuchets à prendre des bécasses.
   L.:—Je suis pris à mon propre piège, Osric.

5. François-Victor Hugo (1er *Hamlet*) (1858):
   P.:—Pièges à attraper des grues!
   L.:—Comme un niais, — tué follement par ma propre épée!

6. François-Victor Hugo (2e *Hamlet*) (1865):
   P.:—Bah! pièges à attraper des grues!
   L.:—Ah! comme une buse prise à son propre piège, Osric![6]

[5]Pierre-Prime-Félicien Le Tourneur (ou Letourneur, voir *infra*, item 13) est l'introducteur de Shakespeare en France. Son édition somptueuse et monumentale du grand dramaturge fut dédiée à Louis XVI par le Comte de Catuélan, et conserva une grande cote durant plus d'un siècle. Guizot en 1821 se contenta de la réviser. La *Tragédie d'Hamlet*, que Jean-François Ducis mit à la scène le 30 septembre 1769, est "imitée de l'anglois," si librement imitée qu'Ophélie est devenue la fille de Claudius. J'indique les dates qui me paraissent correspondre aux premières éditions; le lieu est toujours Paris.

[6]La version intégrale de Shakespeare par François-Victor Hugo, préfacée par son père, le grand poète Victor Hugo, a conservé beaucoup d'ascendant. On

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7. Le Chevalier de Chatelain (1864):
   P.:—Pièges! pièges ma foi! . . . pièges toujours vivaces!
   Appeaux dont on se sert pour prendre les bécasses.
   L.:—He! mon très cher Osrick, ainsi qu'une bécasse,
   —Dans mon propre filet, à plaisir je m'enlace.

8. Louis Ménard (1866):
   P.:—Quel miroir où l'on prend l'étourdie alouette!
   L.:—J'ai de la trahison payé le juste prix: Au piège tendu par moi je me suis pris.

9. Ernest Guillemot (1869):
   P.:—Parfaitement, oui! piège à prendre les oiseaux.
   L.:— . . . pris comme une bécasse,
   Pris à mon propre piège, Osrick.

10. Emile Montégut (1870. 2e éd.):
   P.:—Oui, des lacets à prendre les bécasses.
   L.:—Parbleu, comme un coq de bruyère, pris dans mon propre piège!

11. Alcide Cayrou (1876):
   P.:— . . . Ce ne sont là, ma belle, Qu'engins grossiers tendus à ta crédulité!
   L.:—Pris à mon propre piège, Osric!

12. Théodore Reinach (1880):
   P.:—Pièges pour attraper les bécasses.
   L.:— . . . Tu vois l'oiseau qui tombe
   Dans ses propres panneaux, cher Osric. Je succombe . . .

13. Lucien Cressonois & Charles Samson, (1886):
   P.:—Oui, oui, pièges tendus par messieurs les amants
   Pour attraper l'oiseau qu'ils convoitent.
   L.:— . . . mais le grand justicier
   M'a fait tomber moi-même en ce piège grossier.

s'étonne qu'il ait substitué *grue* ("crane") et *buse* ("buzzard") à *bécasse*, alors qu'il est réputé pour sa fidélité. Gide l'a choisi comme traducteur de base pour le Shakespeare de la Pléiade en soulignant "son désir de ne rien laisser perdre du foisonnement des images." Révisant Hugo dans leur édition de *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* pour le Club du Livre (1972), Yves Florenne et Elisabeth Duret ont retenu *buse* pour Laërte, mais remplacé *grue* par *bécasse* pour l'avis de Polonius à Ophélie.

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14. Morand et Marcel Schwob (1899):
P.:—Oui-dà, des pièges à alouettes!
L.:—Mais, comme un coq de bruyère, pris à son propre piège, Osric.

15. Guy de Pourtalès (1923):
P.:—Hé! pièges à bécasses!
L.:—Eh! comme une bécasse, prise à son propre piège, Osric!

16. Jules Derocquigny (1924):
P.:—Lacs à prendre des étourneaux, pardi!
L.:—Comme un oison, Osric, pris à mon propre piège.

17. Théodore Lascaris (1928):
P.:—Des pièges à attraper les bécasses!
L.:—Comme un niais que je suis, tué sottement par ma propre épée.

18. André Gide (1946):
P.:—Miroir à alouettes!
L.:—Comme un gibier pris à mon propre piège, Osric.[7]

19. Marcel Pagnol (1947):
P.:—Oui, piège à bécasses!
L.:—Comme un oiseau pris à mon propre piège, Osric.

20. Pierre Messiaen (1949):
P.:—Oui, des lacs pour attraper des bécasses.
L.:—Ah! Comme la bécasse prise à son propre piège, Osric.

21. Yves Bonnefoy (1959):
P.:—Ah, piège pour les bécasses!
L.:—Ah, Osric, je me suis pris à mon propre piège comme une bécasse.

22. Maurice Castelain (1969):
P.:—Ouais! pièges à bécasses!

[7]Le singulier *Miroir* est gauche après le pluriel "tous les serments du ciel," et malvenu dans une pièce où le miroir est une métaphore noble: "hold . . . the mirror up to nature" (III, ii, 20). Les mots *gibier* et *piège* sont également d'une grande banalité. Et l'on s'étonne que Gide ait négligé la répétition shakespearienne, lui qui a consulté les traductions de ses prédécesseurs, et qui, dans l'entretien Polonius—Ophelia, a conservé le quintuple *tender* (le rendant par *offre/offres/offrez/offrirez*), et relevé par une note la répétition de *fashion*, (I iii, 99 p.).

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L.:—Ah, Osric, je suis pris comme une bécasse à mon propre piège.

23. Vercors, *Oedipe et Hamlet* (1970):

P.:—Tiens donc! piège pour les bécasses.

L.:—Pris à mon piège comme un pauvre busard.

24. Georges Duval (sans date):

P.:—Pièges à attraper les naïves!

L.:—Comme un coq de bruyère se prend à son propre piège, Osrick!

25. Paul Sonniès (s.d.):

P.:—Oui, le piège qui prend les bécasses (N. Textuellement: les coqs des bois).

L.:—Mais, comme une bécasse (N. Textuellement: un coq des bois), je suis pris à mon propre piège.

Le mot *springe* y devient *piège* (33 fois), *lacs* et *lacet* (3 fois chacun), *filet* (2 fois), *appeau*, *engin*, *miroir*, *panneau*, *trébuchet*, au total neuf traductions. Et pour *woodcock* il y en a douze: *bécasse* (23 fois), *oiseau* (4 fois), *alouette* et *coq de bruyère* (3 fois), *linotte* et *coq des bois* (2 fois), *gibier*, *oison*, *étourneau*, *grue*, *buse* et *busard*. Les mots les plus répétés d'une scène à l'autre sont donc *bécasse* et *piège*. Le double écho n'est reproduit que par cinq traducteurs sur les vingt-six que nous avons cités: Berbrugger (1845), Pourtalès (1923), Bonnefoy (1959), Castelain (1969) et Sonniès. Ce dernier, qui clôt notre liste, est le seul à décalquer *woodcock* en *coq des bois;* sa parenthèse nous donne à entendre que, si *bécasse* dénote bien le même oiseau que *woodcock*, les harmoniques des deux vocables sont perceptiblement différentes.

Peu importe, au fond, le mot choisi, pourvu que l'on garde la répétition. Laërte se montre le fils de son père "More than in words" (4.7.125), mais a fortiori "in words." Certes, il a pris congé de Polonius avant que celui-ci ne chapître Ophelia, il n'est donc pas censé avoir entendu "springes for woodcocks"; mais en répétant ces mots il nous fait savoir peut-être qu'il a écouté, en cachette, l'entretien entre son père et sa soeur — ce serait bien dans la ligne d'une atmosphère où "your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth" (2.1.60), où le roi lui-même et son premier ministre se cachent derrière une tenture pour épier la rencontre de Hamlet et Ophélie. Rainer Pineas, à qui j'ai soumis ma liste de traductions/trahisons, m'a répondu de New York (26 mars 1983):

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I have long been convinced that Laertes' dying use of the proverb is a quite deliberate tactic on Shakespeare's part; that the son's echoing of his father's very modes of expression is meant to indicate their identity in all matters — verbosity, character, ethics, and perverted sense of honor. Laertes' "sermon" to his sister represented what Polonius really thought. Translators who, missing this connection, have felt free to alter the wording of either one have deprived their readers of appreciating this most dazzling encapsulation of Shakespeare's genius.

Dans *Hamlet*, chacun tend ses trébuchets pour attraper l'autre, et le chasseur devient souvent le chassé. L'image de l'oiseau exprime cette ideé. Le spectre fuit "on the crowing of the cock."

"Come, bird, come!" L'oiseau que l'on pourrait convoquer au terme de cette note, c'est d'abord le coq, c'est ensuite cet autre "cock," le *woodcock*. L'oiseau de l'aurore. innocent dans sa jactance sonore, béni dans cette pièce par son association à la nuit de grâce où naquit le Sauveur, y est maudit (dans le coeur du Prince Hamlet) parce qu'il devient chasseur, faisant fuir l'ex-roi du Danemark comme un gibier effarouché. Hamlet se souvient-il de l'Amleth de Saxo Grammaticus, qui feint la folie en battant des ailes comme un coq? Shakespeare veut-il que nous pensions au coq chaque fois qu'il emploie *woodcock*? Et n'est-ce pas à la bécasse qu'il songe lorsqu'il écrit, dans *Winter Tale*: "If the springe hold, the cock's mine"?[8]

Pierre Janton voit *Hamlet* comme "une espèce d'appareil, de réseau, de filet d'oiseleur."[9] Il emploie cette image sans songer aux pièges ni aux oiseaux de la pièce. Cependant, la bécasse évoquée par le père d'Ophélie au premier acte, et par son frère au dernier, symbolise bien l'atmosphère "pourrie" qu'on respire au Danemark depuis que le régicide-fratricide, commis par ruse et en cachette, a transformé le pays en prison. Tout est "out of joint." Rien ne marche normalement. La bécasse ne serait pas tombée dans un des "engins grossiers" de la version de Cayrou (item 11, 1876): elle n'est pas si naïve que cela. Dans son état insensé, elle trouve son salut de la corruption qui est le Danemark. Polonius et Laërte ressemblent à la bécasse plus qu'Ophélie, dont la mort est moins sotte que la leur.

Les métaphores d'un écrivain constituent sa palette, reflètent son

[8]Ce serait le dixième emploi de la bécasse dans son oeuvre, et le seul endroit où il emploie *springe* en dehors de *Hamlet*.

[9]"Hamlet: 'un nom blessé' et des 'insatisfaits'," *Réforme Humanisme Renaissance*, 16 (janv.1983), p. 3.

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univers intérieur. Supprimer un animal de l'oeuvre de Shakespeare, fût-ce en y substituant un autre, c'est déranger son entière ménagerie. Si un bref cliché comme "not a mouse stirring" dans la première scène "adumbrates the frenetic Mouse-trap" de l'Acte III, selon la formule de Kenneth S. Rothwell,[10] et si cette Souricière elle-même englobe le rat Polonius, il ne faut négliger aucun élément du bestiaire.

[10]"Hamlet, Duplessis—Mornay, and the Irenic Vision," *Hamlet Studies*, 3 (Summer, 1981), p. 18. Pour la signification de "mouse" désignant Gertrude dans la bouche de Claudius. voir Mathew Winston, "Misreading *Hamlet*," ibid., p. 54.

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PRODUCTIONS

Joseph Papp Presents *Hamlet**

At the opening of the first court scene I glanced around at the courtiers, most of them hidden by the two pillars of the lower stage. My, I thought to myself, why is that page leaning against the doorpost? How disrespectful. And where is Hamlet? Is Papp going to have him enter later? Moments later I learned that the page *was* Hamlet! Suffice it to say that Joseph Papp has not succeeded in producing an unforgettable *Hamlet* with his new version starring a woman, Diane Venora, in the title role —and for the most trivial of reasons: Ms. Venora is so tiny she makes Hamlet look like a prepubescent boy. Little boys are capable of a good deal, but they are not equipped to be Hamlet, that most multifaceted of all characters in literature. So even if Ms. Venora were able to portray this complex Hamlet, I don't think we would believe it.

A rationale for a female Hamlet is that a mature women can look like a young man and yet have the experience and breadth to project the whole sinuous Hamlet. Ms. Venora may indeed have that capability but she played this Hamlet as she looked: Hamlet's rage became temper tantrums; his despair, juvenile disappointment.

At times Ms. Venora's size makes for unfortunate comedy, as when she is standing next to Horatio, which is not often. Papp clearly doesn't want us to notice that Hamlet comes up to his friend's breast pocket. In fact the blocking seems determined by Ms. Venora's size. Papp has redesigned the Anspacher space so that the whole tier of seats that formerly faced the stage has been eliminated, with remaining seats on the sides, thus almost doubling the playing area, with the new area two steps higher than the original. By placing Ms. Venora on the higher level,

* A New York Shakespeare Festival Production, directed by Joseph Papp, with scenery by Robert Yodice, starring Diane Venora (Hamlet), Kathleen Widdoes (Gertrude), Bob Gunton (Claudius), George Hall (Polonius and First Gravedigger), Robert Westenberg (Laertes), Pippa Pearthree (Ophelia), James Cromwell (Horatio), George Hamlin (Ghost and Player King), Rick Lieberman (Rosencrantz), Ralph Byers (Guildenstern), Raphael Sbarge (Player Queen, Reynaldo, and Second Gravedigger), J.T. Walsh (Luciano, Marcellus, and English Ambassador), Jamey Sheridan (Bernardo and Fortinbras), Stephen McNaughton (Francisco, Cornelius, and Sailor), Rocco Sisto (Osric). In New York City at the Public Anspacher Theater in December 1982 and January 1983.

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or by blocking characters so they stand rather far apart from each other, or in the case of Ophelia, by having Ms. Verona lift her up in her arms, or by having her crouch or kneel or sit when she is with others who are taller, which is just about everybody, Papp attempts to circumvent the disadvantage of her size. Unfortunately, that means that Hamlet seldom connects physically with anyone else. This is particularly regrettable in the case of Horatio, but it's also true of his relationship with his mother, with Claudius, and with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. There is no contrast; he's equally distant from all. Hamlet does sometimes touch others, but to minimize the contact he springs away as quickly again. Coupled with this put Ms. Venora's delivery (strained, affected), and her manner (often nasty, not at all gentlemanly) and we have a Hamlet that is painful to watch.

Her personal grace and beauty, her lithesomness, her passion, her playfulness and her wit cannot offset the insufficiencies, but she does have many good moments. One occurs after everyone leaves in Act 2 and Hamlet says "Now I am alone." Hamlet smiles affably until they leave; then his face changes. The mask of the courtier goes off and the pain and sadness show. There is also a good bit when Hamlet speaks very honestly and directly, not rantingly, to Guildenstern after *Gonzago*: "Why looke you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me . . ." (3.2.380-81).

These moments and the production's considerable beauties compensated for the deficits. The silent or nearly silent characters all contribute measurably to the performance. When the play begins, a marble tomb dominates the lower stage center. We see a regal, marble world—marble walls, floors, screens, benches, a spacious set by Robert Yodice. A death march sounds as two Switzers enter from the back wall, bearing a large grave cloth. Two others follow them with huge national flags. The first two cover the tomb and roll it off; the others follow. I mention this at length only because though it took a moment it did a good deal for expectation and is an example of Papp's attention to detail. It established a whole world where a death ceremony is unattended by anyone but these functionaries: something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Another silent character, Cornelius (Stephen McNaughton), one of the ambassadors to Norway, here a very young man compared to Voltemand, appears and reappears at crucial moments. He is clearly an important member of the court. In the last scene, he reveals through eye contact with Laertes that he, not Osric as in so many productions, knows about the king's plot with Laertes.

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Another interesting though silent character is the woman Player (Annette Helde). She does not act in *The Murder of Gonzago*, but she is present when the players arrive and sits listening intelligently and with interest to Hamlet's advice before the play while she sews on a costume. Papp makes each player's response different. Though the two experienced players, one a young man (Lucianus, the reciter of the Pyrrhus speech, J.T. Walsh), the other an old man (Player King, George Hamlin), do not listen patiently, the young boy who plays the Player Queen (Raphael Sbarge) listens with a great deal of enthusiasm. Sitting on the top of the wooden pageantwagon-like structure to be used for their play, the young man responds but goes unnoticed by the others until he fervently calls "I warrant your Honor," much to the dismay of his elders: they had not wanted to concede anything to Hamlet. This young actor also does a creditable Reynaldo (in a much shortened scene, 2.1) and an amusing second gravedigger, to say nothing of his other, silent, appearance, as wine bearer in the last scene. The supporting actors are uniformly excellent.

The irony is that though this production claims its fame through the female Hamlet, it's the two principal women characters who made this a *Hamlet* worth seeing. They were nothing short of wonderful. I cannot think of a more sweetly attractive Ophelia than that of Pippa Pearthree or of a more dynamic Gertrude than that of Kathleen Widdoes. Ophelia, not a nonentity, adores her handsome brother (Laertes, Robert Westenberg) and her indulgent, loving father (Polonius, George Hall). When these three are on stage together, we find the chemistry missing in Hamlet's scenes. Present at that first court scene, Ophelia never steals a glance at Hamlet, doesn't even look at him until he speaks. As usual, the script cuts part of Polonius's argument to her about not seeing Hamlet, but this is one Ophelia who has all or most of her lines, including those that show her trying to avoid sounding vulnerable when Hamlet mocks her during *Gonzago:* "Still better and worse" is a line we seldom hear from any Ophelia. She is so sure that she is doing the right thing to help the king and queen (and she is present when Polonius hatches the spying plan with them, as the text implies when Polonius says, "Come, go we to the King" 2.1.118) that she is able to say "At home, my lord," when Hamlet asks where her father is, without a quaver. She makes us believe that she is right to do it. Hamlet is brutal to her, throwing the tokens and letters at her, grabbing her face roughly and throwing her down, but even in her terror, she retains her dignity. I question one of Papp's choices for her: how could she speak as she does to Hamlet if she has overheard his "To be, or not to be"? For Papp has

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her onstage, attentive, hiding behind a pillar. Surely she would behave differently, being aware of Hamlet's pain. But having her overhear also makes it possible for us to understand that Polonius and Claudius could hear too. In the text, Claudius's response ("Love! His affections do not that way tend" 3.1.163) seems to depend on his having heard, but few directors make it clear that he *has* heard. Her mad scenes, convincing and pathetic, offer opportunities for the others, Horatio, Gertrude, Claudius, and Laertes, to show their compassion and helpless sorrow. Red-stained rips in her garment indicate that she has already tried to hurt herself.

We can believe that Gertrude chooses not to see Ophelia at first (4.5.1), for she is a queen who does not speak to those beneath her. Papp does not sentimentalize her. Yet when Polonius tells the king and queen about Hamlet's love for Ophelia, Gertrude looks at the young woman appraisingly, not unkindly. Ophelia, in turn, looks back unflinchingly. Gertrude returns Hamlet's letter to Ophelia with a long, communicative, approving gaze.

This is a queen capable of intense emotion. Unfortunately, her connection to Hamlet is shortcircuited by the director's blocking—dictated as I've said by Venora's diminutive stature—which never allows them to stand close to each other. When they finally do embrace, it's on the floor, after a particularly ugly episode where after being slapped and hit by Gertrude, who is enraged at his taunting words, Hamlet punches her repeatedly in the ribs, finally dragging her to the floor.

Gertrude's best scenes are with Claudius (Bob Gunton), a businesslike and rather shallow man. In the court scene (1.2) we see that while Claudius loves Gertrude, her feelings for him are not quite as open. After the closet scene, the relationship between husband and wife becomes more troublesome. When Claudius arrives after Polonius's death, Gertrude's first response is to throw herself into his arms for comfort. When he speaks of the need to restrain Hamlet, she attempts to kiss him passionately, trying to exert her sexual power over him, but he pushes her away. Then realizing that he must not allow his anger with Hamlet to extend to the mother, he attempts to embrace her, but she pulls away. From here to the end they exhibit this kind of attraction/revulsion, wanting each other yet repelled. Kathleen Widdoes makes Gertrude a passionate, intelligent and complex person, one interesting enough to be Hamlet's mother indeed.

Not only were these actors and others superb, but also there were interesting bits of business worth looking at. Papp chose to retain some

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of the old bits, such as the double-take when Hamlet realizes it is Horatio speaking to him (1.2.159); his emphasis on "you" in "Did you not speak to it," to Horatio (1.2.214); the cross-like sword held hilt forward and then forgotten when Hamlet follows the ghost (1.4); Ophelia's distribution of flowers to Claudius, Gertrude and Laertes. But he also introduces several well-thought out interpretations.

In the first court scene, for example, Claudius speaking to Hamlet does not, as in so many other productions, *announce* that Hamlet is heir but simply states this as a fact, a point of information that should make Hamlet more contented. Later in Act 1, there's always a problem about what to do after Hamlet exits with the ghost. Marcellus and Horatio have six lines to say, quite a lot if they are rushing after Hamlet. Twice Marcellus says "Let's follow," the second time with a "Nay." Papp chooses to interpret that "Nay" as a contradiction of Horatio's last line, "Heaven will direct it": in other words, Papp interprets Horatio's line as meaning "we should do nothing, because Heaven will see to it." Having made that decision, Papp had to interpret Horatio's "Have after," two lines before, as Horatio's refusal to go, and his invitation to Marcellus to follow after the ghost if he wants. (This made the audience giggle). Horatio seems a coward, and, by contrast, Hamlet seems brave.

At the end of the next scene, Hamlet follows the sound of the ghost's voice in the cellarage rather than leaping away from it. This makes good sense, but it's not the usual way. Why should Hamlet show terror for or antipathy to the ghost, as most productions have it?

In another among many intelligent choices, Papp economically lets Hamlet learn of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's disloyalty to him and also provides him with a needed prop for the closet scene. Hamlet begins to scrutinize them carefully after he gets a flippant response from Guildenstern upon opening his soul to them, at least partly, in speaking of his bad dreams. Soon, when Hamlet speaks sarcastically to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about the fickle mob who used to make mouths at his uncle but now pay high prices for "his picture in little" (2.2.383), he reaches into Rosencrantz's bosom, taking a miniature on a chain. Clearly, it is of Claudius. It's this miniature that he shows to his mother later. Another interesting point is that Hamlet greets the two men very enthusiastically, then cools, while he initially greets Horatio in a more measured way and then grows in warmth—to the high level of "Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man / As e're my conversation cop'd withal" (3.2.52-53).

In the last scene, the dying Hamlet does not succeed in wresting

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from Horatio the cup of poison. Rather, more realistically, by his words he convinces Horatio to drop it:

> Oh good Horatio, what a wounded name,
> (Things standing thus unknowne) shall live behind me.
> If thou did'st ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicitie awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,
> To tell my Storie.
>
> (5.2.355-60)

If we don't pay attention to beauties like these, a wounded name shall indeed live behind this production. Glowing performances by several subsidiary characters and some effective business merit recognition. Since much in the production pleased, we can only hope that Mr. Papp will not be discouraged from trying other experiments with *Hamlet*, perhaps again using a woman for the chief role. This production, by the excellence of most of its female actors, hinted that a woman might indeed play Hamlet, particularly if she had the physical presence to carry off the part so that she would not have to look and sound like an adolescent boy.

BERNICE W. KLIMAN

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CRITICAL FORUM

("No, no, they do but jest—poison in jest. No offence i'th' world")

Coincidence, Or Influence?

May I respond to the review of two of my pieces devoted to Shakespeare's borrowings from Nashe in the composition of *Hamlet*.* Our reviewer will not let belief take hold of him in regard to the more important of the two, "*Hamlet* and Nashe's *Lenten Stuffe*" (*Archiv*, 219, Band 134. Jahrgang 2. Halbjahresband 1982 388-95.), and only reluctantly accepts the possibility of "*Hamlet* and 'Salary'" (*Notes and Queries*, n.s. 30, no. 2 (April, 1983) 125-6) as something more than fantasy. He does not comment on the related essay to which I refer in the *Archiv* article, "*Hamlet* and *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*," (*The Aligarh Journal of English Studies* VI (1981), 158-167), a copy of which, because of its relative lack of availability in England, I should have sent to our reviewer. I suspect that the *Archiv* piece, though forever dumb to our reviewer, will speak to him who approaches the article without an animus against sources which, according to the review, "inhabit a no man's land between existence and absence." Indeed, he will perhaps discover that the echoes from *Lenten Stuffe* are just as convincing as my 'salary' suggestion, and by virtue of their large number, of particular importance for our increased understanding of the ways by which Shakespeare's imagination worked, and, in at least one instance, for the resolution of a textual crux (*scullion* (F) / stallyon (Q2) / at II.ii.587).

I had assumed, until reading the review, that we all had accepted the following premises: that Shakespeare was habitually a reader of and borrower from the books and pamphlets of others (see Bullough, Muir, Velz); that a knowledge of these borrowings can help to establish chronology, resolve textual cruces, clarify the motivation of characters, and reveal something of the author's intention; that Nashe's writings were an especially fertile source of material for Shakespeare throughout his career and especially in *Hamlet* (see, for example, Harold Jenkins' New Arden edition, p. 106). I further assumed that the citing of parallel terms and phrases increases the reader's readiness to see the probability of

* *HSt*, 5 (1983), 116.

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borrowing, especially when the borrowings are of terms unique in the canon and/or derived from passages the contexts of which are themselves thematically parallel, a probability heightened still further by the clusters of as many as five such parallels appearing on a single page of *Lenten Stuffe*. I must add that I assumed all too easily that, given Shakespeare's borrowings from each of the other surviving works of Nashe, readers would appreciate that it would be a unique omission if Shakespeare had not used *Lenten Stuffe* which was published in 1599 at the time he was beginning the writing of *Hamlet*. In addition, the genre of *Lenten Stuffe*, the mock-encomium, made it particularly attractive to Shakespeare, inasmuch as he was already using the archetypal mock-encomium of the Renaissance, Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*, elsewhere in the composition of the tragedy.

The incomplete citation of parallels in a review may be a necessary consequence of limitations of space, but our reviewer's dismissive phrase "and so on" unfairly spoils the cumulative effect of extended lists, already described by the reviewer as "pointless." Disinterested readers may test the justice of the review by perusing the *Archiv* piece, and judge for themselves whether among the eighty parallels of diction Nashe provided Shakespeare with, along with a 'Bernardo' and a'Laertes', these are simply coincidences; and how it is the deaths of Polonius and Ophelia, the popular enthusiasm for Laertes as king, Hamlet and the grave-digger's speculation on mortality and corruption, among still other episodes, are what they are.

Readers unwilling to accept the fact that Shakespeare was habitually a borrower of other men's printed words, that his memory was particularly associative, and that the tracing of his associations leads to understanding not otherwise available, may appreciate our reviewer's heavy-handed irony of "I suspect Shakespeare could just possibly have come across the word 'salary' without Nashe." I believe that there is more about the nature of Shakespeare's creative imagination than is dreamt of in our reviewer's philosophy, and while I have not succeeded in persuading him, I hope that those who do believe things on the basis of the sensible and true avouch of their own eyes will read the articles.

There is no offense, per se, in a negative review, especially when the review serves to remind one of the need to take nothing for granted, but yes by Saint Patrick (*Lenten Stuffe*, 226) there is, and much offense, too, if students of Shakespeare are persuaded by the dismissive archness of the review not to look at the evidence themselves.

J.J.M. TOBIN

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REVIEWS

A Review of Periodical Articles (1983-84)

The very existence of *Hamlet Studies* is a testimony to continual, perhaps perpetual, discord. The line of critics, more or less regal, seems to stretch out to the crack of doom; and there are signs around (all freely floating, of course) that the peculiarly fluid nature of *Hamlet* criticism could make this text a central one for deconstruction. It is against such a tide that the distinguished Shakespeare scholar, L.C. Knights,[1] seeks to establish a liberal, but solid, defensive wall. This consists of an acceptance that the text is open to a variety of interpretations, together with an assertion that certain limits can be defined beyond which responsible criticism cannot range. So there "is no answer to Hamlet's dilemma: the play provides none," and yet both that dilemma and the nature of the world which Hamlet inhabits are "firmly put before us." Certainty, says Knights, can be claimed for matters of evident fact, structural (the operation of contrasting scenes, dark and outside *versus* sheltered and inside) and thematic (the play is consistently possessed by death); and can be extended to issues within the play (Knights defends the notion that the other revenge figures are present as barbaric contrasts to Hamlet and his father). Two questions suggest themselves about such a critical position. How productive, or even meaningful, are observations of 'factual' certainties? Indeed, to say that a work in which lots of characters die or have died is about death could be seen as merely tautological. But, further, is it possible—logically possible—to claim certainty for something which is an issue? The critical problem thus forms itself into a minor, but sharp, version of a general problem of epistemology: how valid is any assertion of knowledge which is not tautological?

As it happens, some of this year's articles suggestively accompany the desire to claim certainty with engaging, if betraying, nervousness; while others belong firmly to the school of conviction criticism. David Kaula[2] gives us a good instance of the first; while J.A. Bryant, Jr.[3] dep-

[1]L.C. Knights, " 'Hamlet' and the Perplexed Critics," *The Sewanee Review*, 92, no. 2 (Spring, 1984), 225-38.

[2]David Kaula, "*Hamlet* and the Image of Both Churches." *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 24, no. 2 (Spring, 1984), 241-55.

[3]J.A. Bryant, Jr., "Hamlet as Christian Malgré Lui," *The Sewanee Review*, 92. no. 2 (Spring, 1984), 239-55.

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loys a similar argument, but in the manner of the second. Kaula posits a biblical, and in particular an apocalyptic, typology as lying behind *Hamlet*. There are five explicit references to doomsday, and the first of these, Horatio's account of the ominous harbingers of the murder of Julius Caesar, sets up the pattern of the play's denouement in the idea of the Second Coming (Marcellus's evocation of a hallowed and gracious time) and establishes the pattern of opposition by which the progress of the play to that conclusion will be charted. Caesar and Christ were figures commonly set in contrast in the sixteenth century, especially in Elizabethan anti-Catholic writings which associated the former with Rome and Antichrist. A similar dialectic operates in such passages as Hamlet's discourse to his mother on the two pictures, and Claudius's connection with Cain is a further instance of his Antichrist status, with Abel as his opposed Christ-type. To his credit, Kaula is very aware of the dangers of this kind of theorizing: when he ponders on the possible implications of Claudius's name (another Roman emperor, of course, and so also tarnished with papal associations), he frankly admits that Shakespeare "hardly makes obvious" those associations. There do, one might feel, seem to be somewhat more pressing reasons for Claudius's refusal to allow Hamlet to return to Wittenberg than to demonstrate his anti-protestantism, which is one of Kaula's suggestions as evidence for his view. This argument leads Kaula to the conclusion that the end of the play shows an acting-out of the central antithesis. Claudius, as Antichrist, prepares the duel "as a kind of sacrificial ritual," the chalice evoking the gold cup borne by the Whore of Babylon in *Revelation* (well, it *could* be evoking the atmosphere of a court . . .); and Hamlet, his antagonist, thus becomes a Christ-figure. This is, Kaula a trifle nervously adds, not to see Hamlet as duplicating Christ, but as adumbrating Christ.

It is through an historicist approach that Bryant asserts his complementary view. There is a crucial debate between those who argue for religious symbolism as central to Shakespeare's work and those who espouse what he calls a "positivism, which would rule out metaphor and symbol except as ornament." The latter fail to recognize that Shakespeare was the product of an age which limited human reason while expanding the symbolic imagination: they read him in terms of the seventeenth-century revolution in world-view and so actually limit him while freeing human reason. Shakespeare's poetry "shares an ontological context with the sacrament-centered 'old faith,' Catholic or Anglican, that England had known for centuries." In this metaphysical world, symbol was a fundamental need, and the incarnate Christ was

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the supreme symbol of "universal connectedness." With this premise, Bryant traces how the story of Hamlet follows the pattern of Christ's biblical progress. Christ's baptism, his encounter with the voice of God, is matched by Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost (and so the Ghost is a "legitimate part of the symbolic structure"), Hamlet is tested in the course of the drama as surely as, though less formally than, Christ was in the wilderness, and both have to come to terms with death. Whatever one's judgement about the validity of fixing the shape of this most complex of plays according to so neat a pattern, the claim being made is clearly an arrogation to certainty of that which is controversial. Those critics who stubbornly refuse to see all pre-Cartesian literature as entirely or even primarily symbolic might wish to challenge the size of the assumptions and generalizations which constitute Bryant's premise. The assumptions might be correct, but they are not self-evidently so.

Examinations based on imagery would seem, since they are based on that which appears in black and white in the text, to provide steadier proofs; but, as another pair of articles show, are in fact equally subject to problems of interpretation. Karl P. Wentersdorf[4] writes on the associations with lust of the play's animal imagery, listing his material in a lucid, ascertaining manner. These animals are mentioned by Hamlet "when he is thinking disparagingly of sexuality in general and his mother's incestuous remarriage in particular." Such imagery is hence a reflection of Hamlet's revulsion, his "sex nausea." Wentersdorf illustrates (often literally) his thesis with a wide range of reference to art and writing in the classical, medieval and renaissance periods, arguing pointedly that the imagery was current in Shakespeare's time. Medieval and renaissance architecture, for example, was full of it, including instances in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. In *Hamlet* itself, we range from such obvious images as Hamlet's using "satyr" for Claudius, through familiar commonplaces (apes, fish as in "fishmonger"), to animals with more recondite associations with sexuality (camels, whales, peacocks — an emblem book of 1566 illustrates Voluptas by a peacock). The article is pleasant and enlightening reading; but it invites the application of what Henry Suhamy,[5] in a brief yet telling essay on sickness imagery in *Hamlet*, calls the "Metaphorical Fallacy." One aspect of this usefully warning concept is "danger of banality": in Suhamy's examples this is reflected in the "commonplace and superficial" expression of moral sick-

[4]Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Animal Symbolism in Shakespeare's *Hamlet:* The Imagery of Sex Nausea," *Comparative Drama*, 17, no. 4 (Winter 1983-4), 348-82.

[5]Henri Suhamy, "The Metaphorical Fallacy: Some remarks on the sickness imagery in *Hamlet*," *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, no. 24 (octobre, 1983), 27-32.

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ness in pathological terms, while in Wentersdorf's it might be that such repeated imagery fails to tell us anything particular about Hamlet's unique feelings. By the time Wentersdorf has finished, it seems that there is no animal human ingenuity has failed to associate with lust; and that observation might say a lot about human kind, but results in not a lot being revealed about one man.

Suhamy alerts us to a further danger in the imagery approach whatever the validity of individual citations: it may be "misleading to infer that there lies the ultimate message of the play and the literary cement holding the whole text together." He demonstrates this sound principle in two ways. First, that since "the very essence of metaphor consists in producing figurative senses, not factual statements," no usage of imagery can be factually definitive, however tempting it may be to think otherwise. So, when Marcellus declares something to be rotten in the state of Denmark, this is only a minor character's opinion. We are not justified in inferring that Shakespeare wishes us to think of the kingdom as on the brink of collapse. Secondly, through a careful examination of one critic's disagreement with another (Morris Weitz and Wilson Knight), he shows how misunderstanding can arise from a failure to remember that "metaphorical language does not constitute a rigid code." Sickness might indicate more than one thing: "If we lay down on the one hand that disease means sin, and on the other that ebullient vitality is essentially immoral, we are driven to the apparently absurd conclusion that health and sickness are interchangeable." Yet such a paradoxical conclusion is appropriate for a play whose imagery is not univocal, a play in which Claudius's prayer is a physic that prolongs his sickly days and yet Hamlet's resolution seems to him to be sicklied o'er. To move from 'certain' facts to equally 'certain' inferences is the logically dangerous step. Patterns look neat; but *Hamlet* is not a neat play.

That Hamlet returns a changed man from his sea-voyage is an interpretation supported in both Kaula's and Wentersdorf's articles. Another essay by the latter[6] implicitly defends the notion by justifying the pirates episode. It first demonstrates "Hamlet's ability to act decisively and with exemplary courage when he finds himself in a tight corner," and is thus consistent with the man who has already acted by replacing Claudius's despatches. Secondly, the incident would not have seemed melodramatic or improbable to an Elizabethan audience: instances of the predatory activities of pirates are to be found in Elizabethan literature (Greene's *Menaphon*, Sidney's *Arcadia* and other texts), and were

[6]Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Hamlet's Encounter with the Pirates," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34, no. 4 (Winter, 1983), 434-40.

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also common in actuality. Wentersdorf cites a historian's remark that some four hundred pirate ships patrolled the English Channel during the early years of the queen's reign. Moreover, not all these pirates accorded with our stereotype of the cutthroat brigand; some being adventurers from well-to-do families who treated their victims in the merciful manner Hamlet reports. We can gratefully accept these historical observations as a defence of the episode from charges of artistic ineptitude, but, when we infer what the event tells us about Hamlet, we enter the choppier waters of interpretation. Does the episode demonstrate Hamlet's capacity for action (assumed, one notes, as being something praiseworthy in most such arguments) or, shall we say, his capacity for getting himself into a mess (cf. stabbing through an arras without first checking)? Wentersdorf's suggestion that the incident speeds up Hamlet's return to Denmark oddly confuses real time with stage time. The exchange of Claudius's orders is, as Wentersdorf says, sufficient plotting to explain the hero's return, and Shakespeare can make that return seem as rapid as he wishes by the operation of stage time. The episode remains an odd one.

An essay by Maurice Abiteboul[7] accepts the 'changed Hamlet' theory, but sees it as a return to the real self rather than a move to a new self. This is part of a straightforward study of Hamlet's character based on the idea that there is a tension between the duty imposed on him and good will: the work of revenge

> requiert un effort de solitaire et 'marginalise' en quelque sorte le héros; l'esprit de charité et de réconciliation, au contraire, aurait tendance à le 'démarginaliser' et à le conduire à réintégrer la communauté dont il s'est lui-même exclu.

Hamlet's initial meetings with Horatio and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern show his real, social nature. It is circumstances, the death of his father, the re-marriage of his mother and, finally, the appearance of the Ghost, which force him into the role of being 'marginal' in society. This need is enforced by the protection that the simulation of being so marginal affords. But the 'marginal' can only be tolerated if he remains as such: as soon as he acts, he re-enters the world from which he claims to be separate. From the killing of Polonius, Hamlet embarks on a process of re-integration with society; and it is here that the sea-voyage takes its crucial place in Hamlet's shift from marginal to centrally active.

[7]Maurice Abiteboul, "Hamlet, marginal 'par nature' ou 'par accident'?" *Caliban* (Universite de Toulouse le Mirail), no. 21 (1984), 11-27.

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Another incorporation of the 'changed Hamlet' notion is presented by Richard Fly,[8] for whom it is a matter of a renewed sense of purpose, rather than a renewed sense of personality. Both Abiteboul and Fly, that is, want to accommodate the apparent change into a justification of Hamlet as a consistent character: noble consistency ascertains heroic status. For Fly, the hero is consistent not so much in deeds (the confusion of the earlier part of the play manifests a world apparently in a state of collapse) as in attitude. *Hamlet* works by opposition (a common critical decision, as we have already seen), this time between the response to death made by society (to accommodate it by the commonplaces of universality) and that made by the protagonist. While Claudius's speech on the death of fathers employs impressive locutions which "subsume all individuation and apparent differences within a common leveling idiom," Hamlet's "A little more than kin, and less than kind" interposes an articulation of precision, of difference. This is the contrast: Hamlet's iconoclasm insists on the "unassimilable quality of death," evidenced in his need to particularize, whereas social convention endeavours to smooth over blandly. In the conclusion to the play, Hamlet's new sense of purpose dramatizes this conflict. In the graveyard scene he confronts total negation, but uses his discriminating intellect to "take personal possession of the fact of mortality." Thus the very voice which accepts the universality of death simultaneously asserts "its own kind of immortality" through its integrity, its human singularity. Whereas a Laertes surrenders his interim of life to another's will, Hamlet goes on reflecting the singular quality of his life: "the dominant impression of impending closure in the last scene has to accommodate itself to an equally insistent articulation of the stages of human experience leading towards that closure." So the vividness of Hamlet's account of his sea-discoveries (a useful critical addition to earlier remarks on the episode: the action is in Hamlet's language) possesses the "quick pulse of heightened living," and in the final scene he acts as an "agent of life struggling heroically against various forms of ignoble death."

As the engagingly dithyrambic tone of Fly's language might suggest, we have moved into another area which invites, and often receives, the voice of passionate critical certainty: Fly's ringing assertion that Hamlet is the most life-affirming of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists (no Jan Kott he) derives from a clear concept of the nature of tragedy as a genre. Tragedy is a subversive form which obstructs and exposes "the

[8]Richard Fly, "Accommodating Death: The Ending of *Hamlet*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 24, no. 2 (Spring 1984), 257-74.

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tendency of cultures to accommodate the death of individual members." Hamlet's response is the truly tragic one, society's is non-tragic. We can add here an article by Donald Hedrick[9] which also addresses the question of genre and produces a central point (that the satiric and the heroic are not incompatible, but mutually supportive) not unrelated to Fly's conclusion. Hedrick notes that the satiric temperament was considered fitting in a prince by writers like Castiglione and Erasmus: it was the virtue of magnanimity ("right power and self-confidence"). His argument takes in the idea that the Cynic figure, as in Diogenes, and the prince figure, as in Alexander, are enantiomorphous (i.e. left-and right-handed versions of each other): Hamlet reflects in himself both aspects, that of independence from society, a concern for honesty, self-sufficiency, and that of the ruler, the repressed prince. Thus he displays a union of heroism and satire, a "heroism of the spirit" with his passion for truth and contempt for dishonesty. In fulfilling such a role, Hamlet is always engaged in the process of revenge, but a revenge which is an action of the mind: satire is a kind of revenge. To do this, he will modulate from such comic exposures as that of Osric to the highly serious exposure of others' characters in the scene which follows. His final acts of heroic revenge bring fully together the heroic and the satiric modes of action.

It may be significant that these two essays about genre both emphasize Hamlet as a consistent character. To define a genre is to fix the work, to determine its limits as a form; and such an endeavour is easier with a consistent hero than with a schizophrenic one. My Hamlet will be the Hamlet who fits my notion of tragedy, just as my reading of the imagery will fit my notion of the theme. That might look like accepting that we are all trapped in our own discourse; but the vigour of all the articles I have been reviewing (all enjoyable, all thought-provoking no matter how much one disagrees) also suggests that positively communicative criticism of *Hamlet* is very much alive.

If it is a paradox of criticism that each theory which seeks to pin the play down further demonstrates the impossibility of so doing, then much the same, in narrower confines, can be said of textual notes. Robert F. Fleissner[10] gives us a good demonstration of this in his return to the celebrated "dram of eale." His suggestion is that an orthogra-

[9]Donald K. Hedrick, "It is No Novelty for a Prince to be a Prince': An Enantiomorphous Hamlet," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35, no. 1 (Spring, 1984), 62-76.

[10]Robert F. Fleissner, "That 'Dram of Eale' Again: Textplay in *Hamlet*," *American Notes and Queries*, 21, nos. 7 & 8 (March/April, 1983), 98-9.

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phic pun is working, by which a speech berating alcoholic over-indulgence can go on to say that even a dram of e/ale produces evil. As Fleissner points out, Hamlet enters with a pun based on the omission of a letter: "kin" is less than "kind" orthographically as well as in other ways. Nothing here will be definitive; but perhaps that is the point. The attractiveness of Fleissner's idea is that such punning is of a piece with much in the play, and reflects the multiple nature of truth in *Hamlet*.

There are two other attractive notes. Fortinbras's "rights" have troubled commentators. Martin Coyle[11] points out that the rights he claims are "of memory in this kingdom," which means not just remembered rights, but rights whose foundation lies in memory. Memory provides an essential motive for revenge ("Remember me"), and Fortinbras, one of the play's avenging sons, has his revenge in "restoring family honour through war and the military conquest of lands." This seems to square with a play whose working-out of multiple and inter-involved revenge plots results in more ironies than are sometimes acknowledged: Fortinbras's final triumph is one of them. Hamlet's claim to know a hawk from a handsaw is another classic crux. A brief note by Donald K. Anderson, Jr. and Robert F.G. Spier[12] adds a scrap of information that one would rather have than not. In "The Building Accounts of Kirby Muxloe Castle, 1480-1484" (relating to William Lord Hastings's enlargement of his manor house), "hawk" is used as meaning a mortarboard for plastering. This is an earlier usage than is noted in *OED*, and gives us a more plausible contrast of tools than has been suggested, if, indeed, that is what Hamlet is doing.

It has been asserted that the method of murder Shakespeare describes for the killing of Hamlet's father must derive from his knowledge of Bartolommeo Eustachio's *De Auditus Organis* of 1564. Murder by poisoning through the ear does not occur in Shakespeare's sources, while Eustachio's medical text states that "fluid poured into the ear can pass to the pharynx, provided that the tympanic membrane is perforated." Dalton-Gross and Mary Jean Gross[13] now seek to question this large conclusion by noting that Lightborn in Marlowe's *Edward II* describes a similar method of killing. In fact, his method is not the same as Claudius's, although ears and quicksilver figure in two separate

[11]Martin Coyle, "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," *The Explicator*, 43, no. 1 (Fall, 1984), 12-13.

[12]Donald K. Anderson, Jr. and Robert F.G. Spier, "Hawk and Mortarboard in *Hamlet*," *Notes and Queries*, new series, 31, no. 2 (June, 1984), 200.

[13]Dalton Gross and Mary Jean Gross, "Shakespeare, Eustachio, Marlowe, and *Hamlet*," *Notes and Queries*, new series, 31, no. 2 (June, 1984), 199-200.

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methods known to Lightborn. The original suggestion seems sufficiently ludicrous without the qualification: dropping poison into an orifice would suggest itself to even the least imaginative of writers devoid of medical learning.

Three articles discuss later references to *Hamlet*, and are worth noting. Kate G. Frost[14] reports that in the 1614 edition of *The Philosophers' Banquet*, a translation by 'W.B.' of the medieval *Mensa Philosophorum*, there is a specific and quite accurate reference to the 'mousetrap' scene. The allusion does not appear in the 1609 edition. An interesting, if fashionably inward-looking (plays about plays and theatre) article by Scott McMillin[15] uses comparisons and contrasts with *Hamlet* as material for an examination of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The contrasts set into relief some important aspects of *Hamlet*, but McMillin's argument is really about the nature and meaning of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Coming right up to the twentieth century, another article by Robert F. Fleissner[16] discusses interestingly the idea that both Thomas Mann's Tonio Kroger and T.S. Eliot's Prufrock "are obsessed with the tempting nineteenth-century view of the mythic Hamlet-*Figur* as largely promulgated through the criticism of Goethe and Coleridge." He traces how aspects of this familiar and highly influential view of Hamlet (frustration, inability to achieve a reciprocal relation with women, male companionship, feigned sickness as a cover for a real and debilitating malaise) mark these two crucial modern characters. Again, the article is really about the Mann and Eliot works, but it uses *Hamlet* creatively.

Or, rather, it uses an image of Hamlet creatively. For Fleissner's article alerts us to the fact that it is not so much the work of art itself as images of it which can stimulate. If this is true of critical writing, it is also, and more importantly, true of creative art. A long, fully illustrated article on Delacroix by David Gervais[17] shows this principle in magnificent action. The decline of traditional iconography, Gervais argues, led to the Romantic artist's need to fill the vacuum out of his own individuality: symbol in Romantic art is thus something not

[14]Kate G. Frost, "An Unreported *Hamlet* Allusion," *Notes and Queries*, new series, 31, no. 2 (June, 1984), 220-1.

[15]Scott McMillin, "Acting and Violence: *The Revenger's Tragedy* and Its Departures from *Hamlet*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 24, no. 2 (Spring, 1984), 275-91.

[16]Robert F. Fleissner, "The Balking Staircase and the Transparent Door: Prufrock and Kroger," *The Comparatist* (Southern Comp. Lit. Assn.), 8 (1984), 21-32.

[17]David Gervais, "Delacroix' 'Hamlet'," *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 13, no. 1, (1984), 40-70.

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natural, inherited, universal, but strained for by each artist. One of the greatest of Romantic artists, Delacroix, was present at that famous production of *Hamlet* in Paris in 1827 which had in it Kemble and Harriet Smithson, and which was also seen by Hugo and Berlioz (hence one of the most productive of Romantic tragic infatuations and the *Symphonie Fantastique*). Delacroix was inspired to a series of lithographs of *Hamlet*, published in 1843, but dating from the 1820s and 1830s, which constitute no small part of the French Romantic response to Shakespeare. The lithographs convey more than just illustrations to the play: they show a growing sensitivity which opens up the artist's fine, delicate reactions. This is evidenced in his discrimination between the pathos of Gertrude's account of the death of Ophelia and the more tragic feeling of the graveyard scene; and in the way in which his drowning Ophelia, unlike Millais's static figure, has a sinuous wistfulness, even an eroticism, which seems to make the death occur in slow motion. Perhaps this says more about Delacroix than about Shakespeare; but one truth is certain, that the power of *Hamlet* to work on the creative imagination is no small proof of its value and vitality.

W. HUTCHINGS

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Saxo Grammaticus and the Life of Hamlet: A Translation, History, and Commentary. By William F. Hansen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983. pp. xiv+202. index. $17.95.

Saxo wrote a good story. Shakespeare made it better. Both have been studied by generations of scholars. Their production of notes, discussions, papers, books is endless. And Amleth's mill is still going on. In the course of these last eight years the harvest has been richer than usual, and four major works have been published.

In 1975 Mr. Cay Dollerup, a Dane well acquainted with Elizabethan drama, revised the discussions about the Danish features in *Hamlet*.[1] This is only one side of the problem, and the matter might seen rather simple. But with *Hamlet* nothing is simple. In fact, it was a painstaking task to find and assemble suggestions and theories from old and new publications and to sift them from extant sources for the period 1580-1603. The Bibliography contains 250 titles.

An almost unknown and forgotten world is revealed, even for readers in Denmark. Those days had their own sensations and absurdities, as we might call them today. All this is fairly reflected in the play. The investigation is systematically arranged in a hundred paragraphs, most of them leading up to quotations from the drama. Only the Introduction, in ten paragraphs, is concerned with Saxo's tale and related texts. A few theories are discussed, or at least mentioned, about the influence from Byzantium, presumably through Eastern Europe, transmitted by Varangians in the 10th century, as well as through Western Europe (crusades, chivalry).

Already Belleforest, in the 1570s, had noticed that not only Amleth but also the Roman Brutus had saved his life by playing the fool, and that even in the Bible (I Sam. 21: 12-15) young David acts in that way before Achich, King of Gath. In a note (p. 238) Mr. Dollerup declares that Axel Olrik's discussion in 1894 of the Amleth tale and its sources is still by far the most comprehensive one.

But only the first nine books of Saxo were translated and commented on by Oliver Elton in 1894.[2] Then, after nearly 90 years, we got the

[1]Cay Dollerup, *Denmark, Hamlet and Shakespeare: A Study of Englishmen's Knowledge of Denmark Towards the End of the Sixteenth Century With Special Reference to Hamlet* (Institute fur Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universitat Salzburg, 1975), 2 vols.

[2]*The First Nine Books of the Danish History of Saxo Grammaticus: With Some Considerations on Saxo's Sources, Historical Methods, and Folklore*, trans. Oliver Elton and Frederick York Powell (Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, no. 33, 1893; reprinted Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Limited, 1967).

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complete works of Saxo in modern English translation—the first nine books in two handy volumes from Cambridge;[3] the rest in offset printing from Oxford in three volumes, reproducing the Paris edition (1514) with translation and commentary by Eric Christiansen (1980-81).[4] As always, it is a pleasure to read Hilda Ellis Davidson's commentary. Surprising new observations are combined with a cautious attitude towards much busy scholarship. Her interests in mythology and Icelandic sagas are obvious, her learning tremendous. Nobody could have done better. She writes:

> Where Saxo found his story is not known. The name *Amlōdi* occurs in a skaldic verse of the ninth century, attributed to the poet Snaebjörn, where the sand is described as the meal or flour of *Amlōdi*, ground by the mill of the sea. This has some resemblance to the riddle put to Saxo's hero by the courtiers, and it is possible that a collection of riddles, like that in the *Hervarar saga*, was associated with the name of Amlothi. Saxo also knew the story of Brutus, as told by Valerius Maximus, where a young man pretends to be mad in order to protect himself from a tyrant, and may well have been influenced by this. The name Brutus meant "stupid," and was in fact a nickname, and this may also have been the case with Amlothi, although the exact meaning of this name is difficult to determine. . . . The various sayings of Amleth however seem more in place as part of a riddle contest than as examples of madness assumed to deceive a usurper. . . . The alteration of the message . . . could have been taken from a popular story, as could also Amleth's revelation of the deplorable state of affairs at the British court, which establishes his reputation for wisdom. Saxo's reference to the supposed burial place of the hero, made in Book IV, suggests once more that he availed himself of local folklore whenever possible (I, 67-68).

The continuation of the story (sections 9 and 10 entitled "The King of Britain" and "King Viglek" respectively) from Old English genealogies (Wihtlaeg, Warmund, Offa, Thryd, Freawine, Wig), must lead to

[3]Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes, Books I-IX*, volume I (1979), English text, trans, Peter Fisher, ed. Hilda Ellis Davidson. Volume II (1980), Commentary by Hilda Ellis Davidson and Peter Fisher (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer; Totowa, New Jersey: Roman and Littlefield).

[4]Saxo Grammaticus, *Danorum Regum Heroumque Historia, Books X-XVI*. The text of the first edition with translation and commentary in three volumes, by Eric Christiansen (Oxford: BAR International Series 117-118 [1-2], 1980-81).

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the question: are they borrowed from the OE texts, or is Saxo's tale a genuine "tradition going back to early times, when the Angles ruled southern Jutland"? (I, 92). Mrs. Davidson concludes:

> It is unlikely that the Danes took the story from foreign sources, because of the form of the names Uffo and Frowinus, and the precise localisation of the conflict in southern Jutland. Here we have what appears to be an early tradition from southern Denmark, known to the Anglo-Saxons, who by the twelfth century however had forgotten its place of origin and set it in Mercia. It might well have been received with enthusiasm in Denmark in Saxo's time, because of the recent victory which Valdemar had gained over the Saxons (I, 93).

Some readers might prefer the opposite conclusion, that the names and tales were transferred to Denmark by historians from the British Isles. In the 12th century the first biographies of the Danish kings were written by clerics from England. And King Valdemar as well as his natural son, the young duke of Jutland, had scribes (secretaries) of British nationality as Radulf, later bishop in Ribe, and Lucas, an excellent historian and entertainer in the year 1170, as related by Saxo in Book XIV.

Having Saxo's work at hand, a *Hamlet* student might easily be distracted by the other tales in his splendid collection. In 1983, *The Life of Hamlet*, taken out of its frame, has been published as a novel in its own rights. William F. Hansen gives his own translation, less colloquial than Peter Fisher's, and an Introduction divided into four chapters: "The Hamlet Story," "The Hero as Fool," "Legend and Literature," and "The Shakespearean Transformation." The translation and commentary are followed by two appendices, "Hamlet in Danish Annals and Chronicles," and "The First Hamlet Illustrations." There is also a selected bibliography. This handy and beautiful book, printed in America, is commended by Professor Carol J. Clover of the University of California as required reading for students of Shakespeare at that University. Hansen has been able to take advantage of Dollerup's and Mrs. Davidson's works in his choice of relevant comments. So now, sixty years after Paul Herrmann's formidable Commentary in German, English reading students are suddenly in a happy and confusing situation. They have three competent scholars bringing information up to date, in English.

Each work has its own merits; each is different in outlook and in the selection of references. All three commentators agree that Saxo's tale of Amleth was based upon oral traditions from Jutland about the year

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1200—and they all differ with Axel Olrik's conclusion in his fundamental work of 1894, that the main part of the Amleth novel was transferred to Jutland from the British Isles by Lucas about 1170. Instead, they point to Snaebjörn's verse, quoted by Snorri about 1230, in the common conviction that this rather troublesome verse about Amlothi's meal, the sands of the sea, was from about the year 1000. Accordingly, this part of the Amleth story is regarded as an old Scandinavian tradition. The dating is from the 19th century when Snaebjörn was identified with a Snaebjörn galti about the year 1000, mentioned in the *Landnámabok*, and accordingly, his verse was placed in the collection together with other poems from about 1000. Later, Finnur Jonsson rejected the identification with Snaebjörn galti. But the verses remained in their place. The foundation had disappeared. And the traditional dating is founded on — sand.

In his Introduction Hansen gives a very readable and coherent survey of some general problems. His major interests are the more or less relevant contacts with the ancient Brutus texts. Such tales about a hero acting as a fool may be very old, and as Saxo's tale is more logical than the Brutus texts, Hansen is convinced that it must represent an older tradition than the Roman texts. The story about the Hero as Fool, Hansen points out,

> may have spread within Europe by diffusion or descended among Indo-Europeans by inheritance from the proto-Indo-European repertoire or been transmitted by a combination of these means. The probability that the story is an old Indo-European legend would be stronger if it could be shown that a variant of the story existed in India or Iran (p. 36).

Frightened by such folkloristic complexities, the student may wonder whether the less logical arrangement always must be younger than the more logical one—after all, a clever story-teller might *improve* the arrangement of the older text. Thus, the Welsh historians in the 9th-12th centuries delighted their readers with stories about their own Roman Brutus, celebrated as the eponymous hero and founder of the British kingdom.

As an American of Danish extraction, sometimes studying in Denmark, Hansen has naturally visited Elsinore with its elegant castle, now haunted by modern tourists. He reveals the business-minded initiatives in the 1850s to increase the number of local attractions. An "Ophelia Spring" was established; also a "Hamlet's Garden"; and a "Hamlet's Grave" was arranged "in a manner corresponding to the legend" (p. 91).

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Hansen concludes this chapter by reassuring the distressed reader that this

> fraud has had its day, and there is no longer a grave of Hamlet at Elsinore to move, puzzle, or outrage the tourist. The present-day visitor to Elsinore will find merely a pleasant city and an interesting castle and the old gardens, which are separated from the castle by a section of the town. And he or she will probably be a little moved and a little disappointed, the former because it is after all Elsinore, the latter because Hamlet's association with Elsinore is an Elizabethan playwright's invention and because the town and its fortress can scarcely match a pilgrim's fantasy (p. 91).

As another of his studies in Denmark, Hansen has been able to publish a number of sources which were unknown to most English and American readers. They are translated in Appendix I. Of special interest are the annals from the former monastery of Ryd (now Glücksburg) near Flensborg in southern Jutland. The monastery was established in 1209 by monks from Slesvig. In the notes concerning the legendary kings, the annals deviate from Saxo. Amblet and his family are kings of Denmark, not only of Jutland. King Wichlech comes from Norway and wins Denmark by slaying Amblet in the Sound. Shakespeare has the same deviations from Saxo. A copy of the annals belonged to the Royal historiographer Arild Huitfeldt.[5] In 1597 he was ambassador to England (Dollerup, p. 307).

Until now, Amleth scholarship has been a perpetual reading, and reading, and reading, with no pictures to vary the monotony of words, words, words. Professor Hansen's real scoop has been reserved for Appendix II which shows us four of "The First Hamlet Illustrations." Here, English readers can see for the first time the earliest Amleth picture. It could be used today as a poster announcing a performance of *Hamlet*. But the picture is older than the play, and the artist was ignorant of the fact that his Amleth would appear on a stage in front of an audience of Londoners.

NIELS LUKMAN

[5] *Annales Danici Medii AEvi*, ed. Ellen Jorgensen. Kbh. 1920, 17 (and 64) (Danmarks middelalderlige annaler, udg Erik Kroman Kbh 1980, 149-253) — Arild Huitfeldt, Danmarks Riges Kronike. Fra Kong Dan indtil Knud VI. Kbh. 1603. Reprint Kbh. 1978 (Rosenkilde og Bagger), 11-12.

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Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto: A Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from the Henry E. Huntington Library. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Michael J.B. Allen and Kenneth Muir. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981. pp. xxiv+906. $125.00.

In this handsome slip-cased volume Michael J.B. Allen and Kenneth Muir reproduce by the latest and most sophisticated techniques of photography the so-called good and bad quartos of Shakespeare, which is to say *all* the quarto editions of the plays that have any claim to primacy or textual authority. The collection, magnificently produced on heavy paper with a double quarto opening to each page of text, therefore takes its place beside Charlton Hinman's invaluable Norton edition of *The First Folio of Shakespeare* (New York, 1968) as an indispensable work of reference for Shakespearean scholars. Of course, the quarto texts have been individually facsimiled in the past, but the present book marks the first time they have all been assembled between two covers. Because of the superior quality of the photography, these reproductions supersede all earlier ones. Individual pages are identical in size with their originals. In addition, sample microfilming experiments have been conducted to determine the optimum exposure for each text so that readability and contrast could be maximized without in any way touching up, enhancing, opaquing, or tampering with the photographed image.

Twenty plays—roughly half the dramatic canon—appear here. The first quartos of *Pericles* (1609) and of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634), dramas excluded from the 1623 Folio, are included, as are both the good and bad quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* (1597, 1599) and of *Hamlet* (1603, 1604). To the Q1 text of *Richard II* (1597) the editors have added the missing deposition scene from Q4 (1608), its first appearance in print. If similar reproductions of the sonnets and other poems were now to be collected, scholars would have in three volumes the complete printed works of Shakespeare in their earliest available forms. It is to be hoped that some reputable press will undertake this final step in making Shakespeare's originals readily accessible to scholars and students throughout the world.

All the quartos but three have been photographed from the Huntington Library copies, so that this collection becomes, among other things, a showcase for the extraordinary riches of that incomparable repository of Renaissance materials. The three exceptions are the unique copy of Q1 *Titus Andronicus* (1594) from the Folger Library, *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*

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(Q1 *2 Henry VI*, 1594) from the Bodleian, and the unique copy of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (Q1 *3 Henry VI*, 1595), also from the Bodleian. The British Library supplied photographs of its unique final page of Q1 *Hamlet* and of a leaf of *Pericles* that is defective in the Huntington copy.

Unlike the Hinman Folio facsimile, *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto* does not select the most visually perfect pages from multiple copies of the same edition, nor does it present individual formes in their necessarily corrected state. Single copies have simply been photographed as they exist, which means, of course, that some pages remain uncorrected while others have been corrected or miscorrected in press. The editors record known substantive variants among copies in an appendix, carefully noting that their lists do not pretend to be "definitive" but merely constitute "a guide to work very much in progress" (p. 883). A second appendix offers "Notes on the Copies and on Obscured Readings." These identify the peculiarities or special features of the individual copy reproduced and, by reference to other copies, clarify obscurities in the text that have occurred because of poor inking, show-through, manuscript mark-up, or cropping. A number of copies facsimiled here once belonged to John Philip Kemble and, in some cases, bear his manuscript annotations. As such, they obviously have an importance for theatre historians that cleaner copies of the same editions lack.

Scholars who wish to check a particular quarto reading against a modern edition of Shakespeare will have to put up with the inconvenience of turning to yet a third appendix, which keys the conventional divisions of act and scene (in most cases missing, of course, from the originals) to the corresponding signature designations of the quartos themselves and to Allen and Muir's continuous pagination. Hinman handily printed this useful information in the bottom margins of his text pages and, in addition, supplied through-line numbering for the plays of the Folio text. The Allen-Muir system of reference is more cumbersome, and the absence of through-line numbers, invaluable for various kinds of textual and comparative study, is regrettable. Clearly economy was the decisive factor here. At $125.00, the book is already priced well beyond what most academic salaries can afford. Allen and Muir use G. Blakemore Evans's *Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton, 1974) for purposes of line references in their commentary.

In their admirably concise and lucid introduction, the editors generally follow Hinman in their classification of the kinds of quarto represented and in their summary of scholarly opinion as to the nature of the copy that lies behind each. They provide a brief historical description

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of why and how Shakespearean plays usually came to be printed in the first place, discussing the relationship between the inferior and superior texts and attempting to account for their origins. Of the twenty-two quartos reproduced, seven fall into the class of "bad" or memorially reconstructed texts: *The First Part af the Contention (2 Henry VI)*, *The True Tragedy (3 Henry VI)*, *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Hamlet* (1603), and *Pericles*. The thirteen "good" quartos are *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard II*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, *1 Henry IV*, *Romeo and Juliet* (1599), *2 Henry IV*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet* (1604), *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Allen and Muir assign the two remaining texts *(Richard III* and *King Lear)* to a third category comprising "doubtful or mixed quartos"—those whose texts are "comparatively superior" but "marred by some form of memorial contamination" (p. xviii). They depart slightly from Hinman by including *Othello* with the "good" rather than with the "doubtful" texts, but the departure is more apparent than real since Hinman had acknowledged the "measure of authority" that "attaches to the 1622 version" *(The First Folio of Shakespeare*, p. xv).

Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in the two *Hamlet* quartos, which constitute, together with the Folio version, the three texts from which any editor of the play must work. The Q1 reproduced (except for the missing final page) is the Hanmer-Bunbury-Devonshire copy, which contains faint pen and ink alterations in an unknown hand. For the most part these are of minor significance and, indeed, sometimes nearly invisible, although in two instances speech-prefixes have been emended. The Q2 is the Kemble-Devonshire copy bearing Kemble's initials and notes on the title page together with the date 1798. This copy is generally unmarked, although several letters at the tops and bottoms of pages have been touched up as the result of cropping No variants have been found in the extant copies of Q1; eighteen substantive variants (including the date 1605 rather than 1604 on the title pages of four of the seven surviving copies) have been discovered in Q2.

The discussion of these two editions makes no attempt to break new ground but will be found to be extremely serviceable. Q1 is clearly a pirated text only half as long as Q2, its authorized replacement a year later. It was presumably reported by the actor who doubled as Marcellus and the First Player (Lucianus, in the play-within-a-play). The editors illustrate in some detail how far a garbled text such as Q1 can deviate from Shakespeare's actual language by comparing the sound and

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corrupt versions of the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy. Q1 mangles the speech appallingly, omitting some passages entirely but nevertheless preserving "a dozen authentic phrases more or less in the correct order" (p. xiii). Despite the apparent issuance of the 1604 quarto to correct and displace its calamitously debased predecessor, Q2 "is probably dependent on Q1," though on a copy "corrected and augmented by collation with an authoritative manuscript" (p. xvii). Q2 carries over certain of Q1's "misprints"—"cost" (1.1.73) and "interr'd" (1.4.49), for example, which the Folio later "corrected" to "cast" and "enurn'd" (p. xv). It should be noted, however, that Evans and many other modern editors retain "interr'd" as the better reading. Notwithstanding its mutilation of Shakespeare's text, Q1 can be very enlightening on questions of source and staging. The bad quarto seems to contain echoes of the pre-Shakespearean *Ur-Hamlet* (on stage by 1589). Moreover, whereas the good quarto provides no stage direction for the exchange of weapons between Hamlet and Laertes in the fencing match, the bad quarto gives us the lively information that the duelists "catch one anothers Rapiers." Obviously this helps clarify the less specific direction ("In scuffling they change rapiers") of the Folio text.

Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto fulfills a longstanding need of Elizabethan studies. Students of *Hamlet* and, indeed, of all the plays must be grateful for a volume that will certainly remain an important standard authority in textual scholarship for the foreseeable future.

CHARLES R. FORKER

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